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THE
P R I Z E:
OR,
THE LACE-MAKERS
OF
MISSENDEN.

BY
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THE
LACE-MAKERS.

CHAP. I.

IN the village of Little Missenden, in Buckinghamshire, stood the cottage of the Widow Fielding. There was not another cottage in the whole village so neat and cleanly in its appearance, either inside or outside: many people wondered how the poor widow managed to keep her house and garden, and every thing belonging to her, in such “apple-pie order,” for she was herself a cripple, and had been so for two or three years. Her mother, who lived with her, was too old and infirm to be of any assistance; and her two girls were almost too young, to be supposed notable housewives. The truth however was, that Rose, the elder of the two, though scarcely fifteen,

was not too young to be of the greatest assistance and comfort to her mother: she had imbibed from her, precepts, example, and habits of careful industry. Whatever she had to do, she did in the best manner she was able, at the proper time, and in the proper place; and by this simple rule, was enabled to perform a larger share of active duty, than falls to the lot of many persons twice her age.

“ Well, Rose, what do you say to me now?” said her sister Sally, one evening, (as they sat together in their cottage window, making lace): “ you don’t call me very idle now, I hope; you don’t think that I’m not getting on now, do you? You see that when I’ve a mind, I can work as quick as any body.”

“ My dear Sally,” said Rose, “ I never doubted that; I never said you *could* not—”

“ Well, I *would* not, then—”

“ No, only that you *did* not—”

“ Well, *would* not, or *did* not, or whatever you like; never mind what is past; you see *now*, don’t you, that I *can*, and *will*, and *do*, work as fast as any body; as fast as you, yourself, Rose; and that I shall get

through a yard of edging in a day, and therefore in ten days the piece will be finished ; and I am to have two shillings a yard for it, you know ; so that in ten days I shall have twenty shillings.—Well, Rose, what do you smile for ? Ah, I know the meaning of that smile ; you don't think what I say is true ; you don't believe me, you think I am as idle as ever, tho' I am working my fingers off at this minute.”

“ My dear Sally,” said Rose, “ I think that for this last quarter of an hour you have worked with the greatest industry ; but—”

“ Well, Rose, go on.”

“ Perhaps you will think me unkind, if I go on, Sally, and therefore—”

“ Oh no, no, I can never think you unkind ; you never was, and never will be unkind to any body, much less to your poor sister, Sally, whom I know you love, in spite of her faults, her many, many faults ; so pray go on with what you were going to say.”

“ Well, then,” said Rose, “ I was going to say, that you had been industrious for the last quarter of an hour, but that I was

afraid you would not continue so: I was afraid that you would soon be tired; that the good resolutions you made this morning, would be forgotten before the end of the day; that you would never be able to sit still, long enough to get through a yard of edging; and that to do what you were reckoning for, you must persevere for ten whole days together; and I own I thought that impossible."

"Well, for once in your life, my dear Rose, I think we shall see you are mistakeh," said Sally, (shuffling her bobbins about like lightning); "for once you shall see, what I can do, when I *chuse* it, sister."

"Dear Sally, I hope I shall see it much oftener than once."

"Yes, yes, but I mean, that for once I intend to surprise you; I don't mean to *say* any thing, about it, but I mean to surprise you all, you, and my mother, and my grandmother, and all of you; and when I have earned twenty shillings for my poor dear mother, I hope she will not think I am *quite useless*, and a *burthen* to her, as some people tell me that I am. I wonder what my mother will do with the twenty shillings

when she gets them: I think she wants a new gown very much, or a new bonnet; which do you think, Rose?"

" I think that it will be time enough to settle that when the money is earned."

" How like you that is, Rose, ' time enough to settle that;—well, we shall see, we shall not have long to wait, before the money will be earned;—but goodness, Rose, what in the world are those people running by in such a hurry for? and oh, good gracious, do hark, there are the church bells ringing as fast as they can ring. Dear me, what can it be? shan't I just step into the street to know what its all about? I don't mean to put down my work, except for a minute," said Sally, jumping up from her seat, " or to lose any time; I only mean just to enquire, and be back in the twinkling of an eye."

" I advise you not," said Rose: " we shall hear the news all in good time."

" Sally, Sally, where are you, child?" said her old grandmother, calling from up stairs,—" what is all this to do about, my dears? Where is Rose? Where is your mother? What are the people running so fast

for, and what are the bells, a-chiming for at such a rate?"

"I don't know, I can't guess," said Sally; "but I'll find out, and tell you all about it directly, grandmother.—You see, Rose, I ought to go; grandmother wishes it, and therefore I must, you know."

"If you *must* go, you *must*, Sally; but if you only want to know why the bells are ringing, you may stay where you are, and go on with your work, for here comes neighbour Rogers, and she will be sure to tell us all the news, if there is any."

Sally was sorry to be deprived of her excuse for running away, and would still have persisted in doing so, had not her attention been caught by the very unusual appearance of Mrs. Rogers, (Dame Rogers, as she was commonly called). It was no unusual sight, to see this woman with her cap untied, her hair hanging down from underneath it, her shawl unpinned, and all on one side, her apron dirty, and her shoes slip-shod; but it was so extraordinary to see her in a hurried manner, and with a face full of pleasure, *running* along the street, instead of lolling at her shop-door, or sauntering along

from house to house, that every body was surprised, and waited in patient silence for the explanation.

“ Lawk-a-daisy, neighbour Fielding,” she began; (for by this time the poor widow had entered the room upon her crutches)— Lawk-a-daisy, me! such news! such fine news! for me, and you, and all of us,— who could have ever guessed such a thing! tho’ to be sure, for the matter of that, I might have guessed it, for I dreamt last night, that a spark fell from my candle a-hind my counter, and set all my shop a-fire, and there was every thing a-blazing and crackling, and do what I would, I could not *squench* it; so if I hadn’t been a fool, I might have guessed some good luck was a-coming to us. Ah! luck’s the thing, after all! what’s the use of striving and striving; why it never gets you on in the world half so much as a “ *bit of good luck*.”

“ Well, but neighbour Rogers,” said Sally, (whose small stock of patience was by this time quite exhausted), “ you have not told us what this good luck was about; you have not told us the news.”

“ Why, lawk-a-daisy me, don’t you know,



dear, that the old miser as lived so long at the great house, is dead and burried?"

"What, Sir Stephen Rushford?" said Mrs. Fielding.

"Yes, to be sure, the old stingy Barronight as used to hoard up bags and bags of gold, while he was starving himself to death with cold and hunger."

"Dear me, is that all?" cried Sally; "why he died six months ago; you don't call that news, I hope?"

"No, no, child, but you're so impatient, you stop me in the middle of my story. Well, as I was a-saying, Sir Stephen Rushford is dead, and his son and heir, Sir Harry, came into the estate."

"Is this the good luck for us?" said the grandmother. "Ill luck to us, and all his poor neighbours, I think; for how did he do a bit more good in his own parish than his miserly father, when he never came a-near it, but spent all his time and his money too, in hunting and driving, as they tell me he did in Lonnon, upon his own coach-box?"

"Why, that's the very thing I'm a-coming round to, in good time, neighbour;

that's what has brought about the luck ; but you shall hear it all, if you'll let me go on with my story. He was mighty fond of driving, as you say, but he had better have let it alone, for it cost him no less than his life."

" Yes, I remember," pursued Mrs. Fielding, " the fever of which he died, was said to be owing to a fall from his coach-box. Poor man ! how little did he enjoy his fine fortune ; how soon he gave it up to other hands !"

" Lawk-a-daisy, neighbour Fielding, don't be going to sorrow for *that* now, for it is just the very thing to be glad of ;—other hands, indeed, I believe he has given it up into, and better hands a pretty deal, than his own or his father's : Sir Stephen's were always shut ; Sir Harry threw money amongst dogs and horses ; but Sir Clement Rushford opens his for the benefit of his poor neighbours. Aye, aye, we shall see the difference, I warrant me, when he comes amongst us."

" Comes amongst us," said Sally, " why I thought the great house was all shut up, the same as it was when the old gentleman

died ; and that the rooms were all empty and desolate, like a haunted house ; and that the grass grew up in the fore-court, all round the door-way ; surely no gentlefolk can be coming to live there.”

“ Aye, but they be tho’, sure enough, for as I went just now as far down the lane as neighbour Goodall’s, who lives just by the lodge at the great gate, who should I see coming galloping along, but Sir Clement Rushford’s own steward ; so I runs as quick as I could run, to open the gate for him, but neighbour Goodall’s little boy got afore me, for all that ; howsomever, tho’ I didn’t open the gate, yet when I saw him look kindly on Jemmy Goodall, and throw him a penny, I took courage, and dropped him a curtsey, and hoped that Sir Clement was well, wishing all the time he might give me a bit of news in return ; and so forsooth he did, for he told me that his young master, Sir Clement, was just married to the charmingest, most beautifulst young lady in the world, and that they were gone to take a tour, while the great house was all smartened up for ‘em, and that he was come to give all the direction as was proper ; and that in a

day or two we should see a power of workmen, carpenters, and masons, and painters, and upholsterers, and such like, all set to work under his superintention ; and that as soon as possible he could get it done, Sir Clement and his lady would come down, to live for good in their own estate ; and that it would be a happy day for all their neighbours, rich and poor ; and that all the village would have good reason to rejoice and be glad ; and so we will," said Dame Rogers, jigging about in great glee. "There's the bells a-ringing a-ready, and we shall have such feasting, and such merry-making ! Oh now how my poor husband would have liked all this, if he had been alive ! Poor soul ! he never relished working days a bit more than his wife ; but thank my stars, my working days are almost over."

An ill-natured person might have reminded Dame Rogers that her working days had never begun, for she had passed her life in idleness ; but Mrs. Fielding and her daughter were both too charitable to damp her present joy by such an unseasonable remark ; and even the grandmother herself, tho' she was often a little hasty and severe,

refrained, upon this occasion, from any expression of disapprobation, beyond a sigh and a shake of the head, with a proud look cast upon her daughter, and her granddaughter Rose, as much as to say, "these are not your notions;" and an anxious doubtful glance upon Sally, that seemed to say, "I hope these will not be yours."

Dame Rogers was no sooner out of sight, however, than she warmly expressed her sentiments, which, to say the truth, were very just ones, upon the bad effects of indolence in early youth. The happiness of the first part of her own life, had consisted in an active performance of her girlish duties; when she became a mother, her whole heart had been bent upon bringing up her daughter in the same habits, and preparing her to perform, in her turn, the duties of her station: the pride and delight with which she had seen the full success of her endeavours in the excellent conduct of this daughter, were renewed to the good old woman in the person of her granddaughter Rose; and she began to think, that a girl who is well brought up, must be sure to turn out, even from the first, every thing that she ought to.

be.—“Train up a child in the way he should go,” was her favourite maxim ; but she forgot that it is not till he is old, that we are taught to expect that “he will not depart from it.”—She was therefore much surprised, and not a little angry, when the symptoms of a careless and idle disposition first shewed themselves in Sally.

Fortunately for the poor girl, her mother was disposed to make more allowance for the weakness and failings of her fellow-creatures, and more especially for her children : she knew that many an evil temper, or perverse disposition, is to be conquered by steady perseverance and attention ; she did not therefore despair, tho’ Sally was now fourteen years old, and was still deficient in many essential points, seldom shewing steadiness in the pursuit of any thing but amusements, and ready upon all occasions to give up duty to pleasure ; and tho’ her grandmother seldom let a day pass without two or three dismal forebodings, “Ah, Sally, Sally, you will never be the woman your mother is ;—you’ll never come to good ;—you’ll be the disgrace of us all ;—your good sister Rose will be ashamed of you ;—you’ll be the first.

slattern in the family for these three hundred years.—Ah Sally, it was not by gadding about all the morning, that your grandmother won the prize for lace, the finest bit of lace that has ever been made in all Buckinghamshire!”—

At the mention of this event, a long history of the good and bountiful lady generally followed, who in her younger days had distributed prizes annually to the young lace-makers, and had particularly distinguished her, by returning the piece of lace for which she had gained the prize, desiring that she would wear it upon her cap every prize day. “ Ah,” said the old woman, smoothing the plaits of the cap now on her head, “ I shall never wear it any more; those happy days are all over, and my Lady Bloomfield is dead, and times are altered now, and girls are all growing idle and good for nothing, all but my dear Rose, my own dear one, who will be the comfort of her poor mother, while Sally will be a burden to her!”

This last expression, as we have already heard, made some impression upon Sally, and roused her to a temporary exertion: she could not bear the idea of being a burden to

her mother, whom she really loved, so she worked for one half hour, and, for aught we know, she might have worked for another, if it had not been for the ringing of bells, and the unfortunate entrance of Dame Rogers.



CHAP. II.

THE next day Rose, who was not to be put out of her course, even by good news or a ringing of bells, having gone through the business of the morning with her usual exactness, hung her basket on her arm, and went to neighbour Rogers's shop to buy candles and bacon.—When she got to the door, she found it standing open, but the shop was empty ; she called as loud as she could, several times, but nobody answered : she determined, however, to wait a little, in hopes that Mrs. Rogers would make her appearance.

It was Saturday afternoon. As she stood in the door-way, several of the villagers came to the shop to buy for the week, and Goody Clapham came up to buy her a pound of tea, but seeing nobody at home, she turned a way, and proceeded to the shop in the other street. Lucy Dawkins came tripping along ;—“ Mrs. Rogers, some sugar, if you please.—Oh dear me, nobody at home.” Jenny Thomson came next ; “ Two pound of candles, Mrs. Ro-

gers :—Oh dear me, the shop empty ; I must seek 'em elsewhere.”

Rose endeavoured to persuade them all that Dame Rogers would soon be at home, but they had none of them a minute to spare, and could wait for nobody ; even the patience of Rose herself was almost exhausted, when at last she saw Mrs. Rogers coming in a snail's pace along the street.

“ Ah, Mrs. Rose, is it you, I'm glad to see you, dear, for I've more news to tell you. I've been a talking with the clerk, and he says as how that the pew in the church is going to be new lined.”

“ Would you be pleased, Mrs. Rogers, to let me have the candles directly, for I'm in a great hurry, and have waited a long time.”

“ Dear me,” said Mrs. Rogers (much offended with Rose for interrupting her, and for having no taste for gossiping), “ I am very sorry, Ma'm, you should have waited ; pray, Ma'm, why did you wait ? There are other shops in the town, where you might have laid out your money without waiting.”

“ I know that,” said Rose mildly ; “ but I would rather lay out the money with you than other people, Mrs. Rogers ; and I tried

to make the other customers wait as well as me, but I could not persuade them, so they all went away."

" Other customers," said Mrs. Rogers, in an altered tone of voice : " there now, there's my ill luck ; I do but step out a minute, just to get a bit of chat with a neighbour, and the folks are sure to come to my shop while I am gone, though I have not had a customer before these three days. Ah, it is no use striving ;—ill luck will keep me down in the world, do what I will.—Bless me, how the mice do get to these candles ! I didn't think as how I'd stop up the hole in the box, but some't put it out of my head.—Here, child, here's one pound as they hav'nt touched howsomever, and here's your bacon, and thank you, dear, for your custom ; and I hope I shall see better days soon, for some how or other," said she, (casting her eyes round her desolate untidy shop, where every thing was out of place and order), " somehow or other, I don't get on so well as I could wish, with this here trade ; but howsomever, I'ze a-going to write to my sister-in-law in Lonnion, and I hope she'll give me a bit of advice, for she's monstrous clever and sharp, and

well to do in the world ; and then when my Lady and Sir Clement comes, nobody in *their* parish will come to want : so I think better days, and better luck will befall me soon, and when they do, I sha'nt forget you, dear, you may depend."

Rose thanked her good-humouredly for her kind intentions, though she neither expected nor desired the fulfilment of them. Some people derive good, and others harm, from every passing occurrence in life. A bad example would to many girls have proved a source of mischief, but with poor Rose it had only the most salutary effect ; and as she walked along, she made many useful reflections upon the miserable picture of idleness which she had just beheld. " Ah, my dear mother, I see the truth of what you have so often told me ; I see, and I hope I shall never forget."

Rose was interrupted in her meditations by a crowd of children who were rushing out from a day-school that was just broke up. In their eagerness to escape from confinement and discipline, into open air and liberty, they pushed and jostled and tumbled over one another without mercy. Rose waited till

they had dispersed a little before she attempted to pass, and in this time her attention was caught by a pretty little girl of about seven years old, who stood looking very unhappy, and leaning against the door of the opposite house, with a little book in her hand, watching the troop of merry children.

“ Ah, Betsy,” said one of the boys, “ why han’t you been to school to-day, as well as the rest of us ?”

“ Ho, ho, Miss Betsy, what, you’ve shirked,” bawled another.

“ She dared not come, she knew she could not learn her lesson,” cried a third.

“ Her father can’t afford to pay for her schooling,” said Rachel Skinner, (a disagreeable looking girl, about the age of Rose), “ that’s the truth, poor thing, so she needn’t deny it.”

“ I don’t deny it,” said the poor little girl, bursting into tears ; “ I don’t deny it, so you needn’t all be so ill-natured to me ; but I will not be a dunce, that I am determined ; I will teach *myself* to read,” said she, seating herself on the step of the door, and applying herself to her book. She could not see the letters however, for the tears blinded

her eyes ; so she covered her face with her hands, and was silent, while the children, all laughing and hallooing, and busy in search of amusement, ran off in various directions, all but *one* little boy, who staid behind, and when they were out of sight and hearing, laid down his hoop and stick, and stole up to the poor little girl, and seated himself by her side.

“ I say, Betsy,” said he, “ shall I help you?”

“ Is Rachel gone ?” asked the little girl, fearfully uncovering her face, and looking round .

“ She is quite gone ; they are all gone,” said the little boy, “ and so now let’s be comfortable and learn together, you and I, Betsy.”

“ But perhaps,” cried the little girl sorrowfully, “ Rachel will come back, and the other boys and girls, and may be they’ll laugh at us.”

“ A fig for Rachel, and all the other boys and girls in the village ;—‘ let them laugh that win.’ So now dry your eyes, and let us see what we can do,” said Billy, turning over the leaves of the book: “ I can teach you all the letters of the alphabet.”

“ Not now, dear Billy,” replied Betsy, in a hurried manner, “ here’s my daddy coming, and mayhap he’ll want me, so you may go quite away, dear good-natured Billy,” said she, hastily kissing him, and trying in vain to hide the tears that again filled her eyes.

“ When shall I come again, Betsy ?”

“ I cannot tell you now,” replied she ; “ but I’ll ask mother, and then when I see you next we’ll settle all about it.”

CHAP. III.

Rose, who made it a rule never to stop or loiter when she was sent of an errand, hastened homewards as soon as she saw the little girl turn into the cottage door; but she had been so much interested in the scene she had just witnessed, that she thought of little else the whole evening. It was not idle curiosity, or a love of gadding abroad, that brought Rose, at an early hour, to their cottage door the next morning.—She had a benevolent plan in her head, for which she had gained her mother's consent, and she walked with all that alacrity which a light and innocent heart inspires.

When she entered the house, Betsy's father was busily employed in dividing a loaf at a table, where two younger children were placed, while Betsy, seated in a little chair by the fire-side, held an infant in her lap, and at the same time continued to stir the porridge that was boiling on the fire.

Without affectation or preface, Rose made

known the purport of her visit: if you like to come to me, Betsy, every day when the children go to school, it is just the time that I sit down to lace-making, and I will teach you to read as well as I can, with all my heart.

Betsy stared at her, as if she did not know whether she was in earnest or no; while the mother joyfully exclaimed, "Kind good-hearted creature, heaven will bless you and make you happy, as you deserve to be; you are neighbour Fielding's daughter, Rose, I believe; I thought I knew you before you spoke, by your neat and tidy dress."

When Rose undertook a task, she always pursued it with steadiness and perseverance; she was faithful therefore to her engagement, and by her unremitting and patient attention, her little pupil soon made a very rapid progress.

In the mean time, the rest of the village was all in commotion with the preparations for Sir Clement and Lady Rushford. The improvement and repairs at the great house were quickly advancing, and it was given out that they would arrive by the end of the next week.

Dame Rogers, more pleased, more idle,

and more unsettled than ever, came in one morning to neighbour Fielding on most *particular business*.—

“ You must know,” said she, “ as I told you afore, I wrote a bit ago to my sister in Lonnon, to tell her all the news of the place, and to ask her advice about my consarns, which at present to be sure are rather bad-dish, but likely to be better soon, I take it; as perhaps you’ll think, when I shew you this letter, though, to say the truth, I can’t quite make it all out; so that brings me round to what I was going to say at first, which was, that I was come to ask you, being a better scholar than me, to try and read it all out to me from one end to the other:—No, you need not go away, dears,” said she to Rose and Sally, “ there’s no secrets. So now begin, Mrs. Fielding, if you please,” continued she, rubbing her hands and settling her shawl.

Mrs. Fielding took the letter, and though she was a good scholar, it was not without some difficulty that she read as follows :

“ DEAR SISTER,

“ Upon the first perusal of your epistle, I was almost over power’d with grief at the

tale of your misfortune ; but I was overjoyed soon after, when the reflection struck me, that I had it in my ability immediately to relieve all your most interesting distresses.

“ The cause of your failure is hevident. Who with such a petty trade as yours can possible hope to rise in the world ? Lady Rushford, you say, is coming to reside in the neighbourhood : Oh what a fortunate circumstance for *you*, if you do but strike the right nail on the head, as the saying is : hexalt your sentiments, my dear sister, raise your high deas, turn aside from bacon and candles, and such like kitchen stuff, to some thing a little more genteel ; for how can you ope for the custom and patronage of my Lady Rushford, if you honly deel in such low and degusting comhoddities ? Millinery, give me leeve to assure you, millinery and fancy dress making are now a days the honly roads to fame, welth, and 'appiness. For instance, think, my dear, what a hinsignificant beggarly profit do you receive upon your soap, candels, and cetera : were has a cap hor a 'at of mine pinned up hout of the slopings of some lady's dress as I have nad the making of, sells at my shop, my hapartments I mean, for two ginnis !

" But, my dear, in this as in every thing, fashion is all ; for without fashion and taste you would not get 6d. for the smartest cap in all Lonnon ; but ere I am proud to say I can a sist you, and a sist you hi will, if you 'ave but the spirit to follow the plan I am going to propose ; it is then as follows :—

" That you set about directly and clear your shop of all the ungenteel and dirty rub-bish that it contains ; pack 'em all up, and send em to me by the vaggon ; I'll take 'em all off your 'ands at once, and send you instead, a stock of millinery from my own apartments, sufficient for your own use :— ribbons and sattins, and such like expensive articles, you must lay in afterwards.

" Then, my dear, as this is a line to which your genius has never turned, I propose to send you, though it will cost me dear to part with her, my own daughter !! My lovely Eliza !!!! for I cannot call her Betty, tho' she was unfortunately christened so. Eliza, my deer, in addition to her numerous accomplishments, is a parfect proficient in the art of millinery, and so shewy and pretty, that when you want to shew off a cap or

“ ‘at, you need only try it on her head, rea-
membering to put it a little on one side, to
be sure of setting it off!

“ My dear sister, with your shop a little
painted, and hornamented with a few arti-
ficial flowers too much soiled to wear, stuck
about it, with my caps and ats in the window,
and Eliza for your assistant, you will want
nothing else to be sure of succeeding.

“ You must have *Mrs. Rogers, Milliner*
and Fancy Dress Maker, from Lonnon (don’t
forget *Lonnon*), printed on the door-way, in
gilt letters, if you can afford it, if not, in your
rustic village *yellow* will do, and depend upon
it, as I think there is no other shop of the
kind in your rustic village, my Lady Rush-
ford will not be long in her country seat
without looking in upon you, if it is only
for a lounge; and when you have secured
her country custom, you may recommend
me, against she returns to town.

“ And now, my dear, having filled this
long sheet of paper, and said every thing as
I could think of, I must bid you a-dew, sin-
cerely wishing you success, and ealth, and
appiness. Write to me directly, to tell me

whether you give in to my advice, as in that case, Eliza shall set off to Missenden by the coach. I am impatient for you to commence your career. Once more a-dew.—I am,

“ Ever yours,

“ AMELIA BURROWS.”

“ N. B. Don’t be distressed at your own dress; Eliza has so much taste, that she will soon alter every thing to a suitable and becoming style for you.”

It will be unnecessary to inform the sagacious young reader, of the effect this letter produced upon Mrs. Fielding’s family. They will see in imagination, the contempt and indignation of the old grandmother, the concern of the widow Fielding, and they will fancy too, that it was as much as poor Rose could do, to restrain Sally from bursting out into a downright fit of laughter.

They will, however, find it difficult to conjecture in what possible manner Dame Rogers herself was affected, by so unheard of, so wonderful a scheme. It will be right, therefore, to tell them, that far from being overpowered by the thought of so sudden a

change of trade and character, the notion of making a fortune, by means of a concern, the management of which was to be undertaken by an assistant, was so exactly the thing best suited to her wishes, that it was in vain her wiser neighbours advised, cautioned, and remonstrated. Her own relatives, she said, had the best right to be attended to; and now that a bit of luck was thrown in her way, she wouldn't step over it for nobody; so she actually set about, and packed up all the smaller articles in her shop, and sent them by the waggon to London; the rest she sold off among her neighbours for half their value, in order that every thing should be cleared away before the great folks made their appearance; she then waited with the greatest impatience the arrival of Eliza and her band-boxes from London.

CHAP. IV.

AT the end of a very pleasant tour, Sir Clement Rushford was induced, by the wishes of his wife, to pass a short time at the house of Dr. Lenox, her uncle, previous to their return. Dr. Lenox was a skilful and eminent physician, and a man of the most humane and benevolent disposition. In his well-ordered family the time passed so rapidly away, that the arrival of the day appointed for their departure, was seen by both parties with mutual regret. Lady Rushford had been much interested by the various traits of goodness which she had remarked in each of her little cousins, but she had been particularly attracted by the artless sweetness of manner, and frankness of disposition conspicuous in Letitia Lenox, the second daughter; and she prevailed upon her father and mother to entrust her for some time to her care.

“ I know not what treasure I should fear to entrust to your keeping, my dear Caro-

line," said Dr. Lenox to his niece, " I therefore do not hesitate to resign my Letitia into your hands for the present."

Lady Rushford, though she took the greatest pains to win the regard of her cousin, and as much as possible to promote her happiness, was not the least surprised or disappointed at the grief which she expressed at parting, though but for a time, with her father and mother; she loved her the better for the warmth of heart which she manifested on this occasion, and patiently waited the return of her usual vivacity.

" Is this the last stage?" asked Letitia, who began to be very weary of a journey from Wales into Buckinghamshire.

" The last stage, my dear," replied Lady Rushford—" we shall soon reach the village of Missenden."

" How glad I shall be to get out of the carriage; how I shall enjoy a walk in the garden, after being cramped up so long. Have you as nice a garden at Missenden as we have in Wales, Lady Rushford?"

" I have never seen it, and know very little more about it than you do, Letitia."

" Never seen your own garden! dear, how

very odd that seems; why, I have been in every little nook and corner of ours a thousand times over; I know each vale, and every ahey green, dingle, or bushy dell: dear me, if I had never seen my own garden, how impatient and curious I should be!"

"Perhaps you are a little so now, my dear," said Lady Rushford, smiling:—"Sir Clement, perhaps you can gratify us by some account of this same garden."

"I know nothing more of it, at present," replied Sir Clement, "than that it is very extensive, and I should fear, very uncultivated; but I hope your taste, my dear Caroline, will find ample scope for exertion, in laying out the grounds to advantage."

"Oh we shall be great gardeners, I have no doubt," said Lady Rushford; "Letitia, you must not expect to be an idle visitor at my house; I shall have a world of occupation for your hands, your head, and your heart I hope, though I know you have left the largest share of that at home.—Thank you for that smile, though I see a tear in the corner of your eye, into the bargain. We are, my

dear, both strangers in the land which we are going to inhabit, and shall have much to do, before we can hope to gain the good-will of our neighbours; our poor neighbours I mean, for it is they who are to me of the greatest consequence. A few ceremonious visits, paid and received according to etiquette, establishes our credit with the rest; and when we have had time to judge of characters, and acquaint ourselves with merit, we may cultivate intimacy upon equal terms with whom we please. But from what I hear, the humble inhabitants of our own village have, for some time past, required the attention and service which it is our duty to bestow, and we must endeavour to make up to them for the long arrears that are their due. One of the first tasks, therefore, which I shall assign to you, my dear young friend, will be to accompany me in my visits to them."

"If all my tasks are to be as agreeable as this," said Letitia, "I think I shall not have a very weary life to lead—"

"But look," interrupted Lady Rushford,

“ what a pretty village that is in the valley. How snug the little cottages look peeping out from the trees, and how well the large house we perceive, seems sheltered by that beautiful wood !”

“ I am glad you admire its situation, my dear Caroline,” said Sir Clement, “ for that is your own house, and those bells that we hear at a distance, are, I have no doubt, the bells of Missenden church.”

“ How sweetly they sound across the water,” said Letitia ; “ how I wish we were there : do let down the glass, that we may hear them more distinctly.”

The carriage rolled swiftly along, the sound of the bells became louder and louder, and the servants galloped forward to announce the approaching arrival. The great gates at the lodge were thrown open, the villagers assembled together in a mob to see the carriage as it passed. Dame Rogers, poor Dame Rogers ! her shop was not prepared, though she and Eliza had worked harder than ever they did before in their lives, to get it ready.

“ Oh, lawk-a-daisy me, what shall we do ! the carriage is a-coming, Eliza, put them

ribbons in here, or any where.—Oh lawk, that's all full of onions—well, never mind, leave them on the counter, and let you and I come and see the fine folks as they pass.”

“ I am not dressed, Mrs. Rogers, I can't be seen such a fright as this; there's them things left promiscuously, as I may say, in the window; there's pieces of candle, and soap, and pieces of cheese; they'll betray you, depend, Mrs. Rogers, and my Lady will find it all out,” replied Eliza.

“ Well, suppose we shut up the shop, and claps up the shutters, till to-morrow morning, and then nobody will take no notice of nothing, till we comes out all of a sudden quite grand.”

“ So we will,” said Eliza, “ and I can just slip on my Spanish cloak and at, and then nobody'll see my dirty gown.”

All this being speedily accomplished, Mrs. Rogers and her assistant reached the lodge just as Sir Clement's carriage drove into the park. Lady Rushford smiled and bowed as she passed. “ Heaven bless them! Long life to Sir Clement and his Lady! Welcome, my Lady; welcome, Sir Clement, to Missenden!” was echoed again

and again, till the party alighted, and the carriage drove round into the stable-yard.

All this time Rose Fielding staid quietly at home, and prepared the tea for her poor mother, whose lameness kept her constantly confined to the house, and disabled her more and more every day. It is true, that she would have liked to have gone with the other young people of the village, to have seen the carriage, but she thought so little of herself, or her own pleasure, in comparison with her mother's comfort, that she did not express the slightest wish, either by look or manner, to do so. Sally, however, was quite in her element; and long after all the rest of the crowd had dispersed and retired to their houses, she and Mrs. Rogers, and Eliza, remained staring in at the gate.

“Did you see how the bride was dressed, Miss Sally?” said Eliza. “Tho’ I needn’t ask, for nothing is worn now but the *Wellington hat*, and *Spanish cloak*.”

“Is yours a *Wellington hat*?” said Sally, looking up at her strange head-dress with simple wonder.

“La no, my dear, mine’s only the mear *Spanish custome*; but I opes to ave a true

spicimin of the *Wellington* in my aunt's window afore to-morrow morning ; so if you likes, Miss Sally, to come and sip a dish of tea vith my aunt and me this evening, you shall have the first sight on it, I promise you."

Sally was highly flattered by this proposal, and, upon Mrs. Rogers joining in the request, she agreed to spend the evening with them, instead of returning home, as she ought to have done, where many unfinished tasks awaited her. The lace, that in ten days was to have grown to the length of ten yards, measured precisely the same at the end of six weeks, as on the day that Rose and Sally had held the conversation already related : from that time new projects had filled her head, new pleasures had attracted her attention. It was in vain that Rose reminded her of her good resolutions. " Oh, I'll work hard at it soon, you may depend upon it, dear Rose ; I'll set hard to work at it before long, and when once I do, it will soon be finished ; but in the mean time, the bit of lace that was on the pillow became soiled with the dust, and the bobbins were all tangled together.

After an evening spent with the new milliner, and her niece, poor Sally did not return with improved ideas or dispositions of any kind. Eliza had fully succeeded in her desire of creating her astonishment and envy, and had shown off with great effect to this poor simpleton, by describing the grandeur of her situation in *London*: she talked away at a great rate, of walking in the Park of a Sunday, and drinking tea in Pimlico and Waxhall Gardens, and being dressed in the *tong*, whilst her aunt and poor Sally, who listened with silent attention, little dreamed, that in reality, she had lived with her mother in obscurity and indigence, and that the scheme of sending her to her aunt, had been devised by the latter, as a happy method of getting rid of her at once.

Sally beheld the structure of the Wellington hat with wonder and admiration.—“How I wish I was as clever as you,” said she.

“ Well, my dear, who knows but in time you may,” replied Eliza affectedly; “ that is, if you *wish* to be in as genteel a way, I am sure any instructions that I can give you, shall be quite at your service.”

“ Thank you,” said Sally, “ if you think

there is any thing in the *plain* way, that I could help *you* in, I should like it very much; I can hem and sew for you, whenever you want it."

This was no unwelcome proposal to Eliza, who had no *taste* for any of these vulgar arts; and she immediately agreed with Sally, that whenever her mother could spare her, she should come and work with her.

A plan being settled, Sally recollected it was time to go home—"Well then, for the present we must part," said Eliza, "but let us meet again to-morrow, for to-morrow we shall have to open shop, and make our first appearance, and you must be with us, Miss Sally."

"Ah do, dear, come and lend us a lift betimes in the morning," said Mrs. Rogers, "for I'm afraid we shall be put to it after all."

"I will be sure to come to-morrow," said Sally, preparing to go—

"Before you put on your bonnet, do let me try on this sweet hat upon your head, my dear," said Eliza: "I want to judge of the *heffect*: well, really it does charmingly; I declare you look quite genteel:

what a surprising change it makes: I always thought there was a something easy and genteel about your looks naturally, if it wasn't for your dress; quite different from your sister Rose, some how. She seems to be suited to her humble station; cut out for it, as it were, from top to toe—a sort of an *air like*; but there's about *you*, that makes one fancy you was intended to be *genteel*, if it wasn't for that stuff gown, that black bonnet, and red cloak. Well, I wish you good night, my dear, I wish you good night, Sally."

In spite of these kind wishes, poor Sally had no chance of a good night. The delights of being thought to look as if she was *intended* to be *genteel*, and the mortification of hearing that her dress destroyed such a delight, deprived her of sleep many hours: objections had been made to her gown, her bonnet, and her cloak; she had no hope of being able to change either; they must last her, and remain in their present fashion for at least another twelvemonth.—Well, when once she was grown up, and was her own mistress, she would make up for it, and be as *genteel* as any body. In the mean time,

she would live as much as possible with her Eliza, and try and improve herself, by imitating her as much as she could ; and who knows, thought she, but some of these days, I may turn out *something genteel*.

The next morning Sally was reproved by her mother, and scolded by her grandmother, for staying out so late in the evening, without their consent. “ Aye, aye,” said the old woman, “ she wanted nothing but such a companion as this flaunting milliner’s daughter to complete her. Fine doings, indeed ! so you, Miss Sally, are to be taking your pleasure abroad, whilst your poor sister Rose is fagging her life out to do all the work at home.”

Poor Sally listened with as much patience as she could, to the long lecture which fell from the lips of her grandmother, but she was rather dismayed, when, just as she thought it was coming to an end, she received from her hands a task of plain-work, which was positively to be finished before she was allowed to stir from home.

For some time she was too much out of humour to do any thing but lament and complain ; but the wise and kind advice of her

sister Rose at length convinced her, that this was only lengthening her own punishment ; so she sat hard to work, resolving, the moment her task was finished and her liberty regained, to repair as speedily as possible to her new friends the milliners. " How odd it is, " thought she, " that Rose can persuade me, when nobody else can ; but she has such a kind way of speaking, and looks so good-natured all the time ;—ah, I love her dearly, and I am sure I shall always love her better than any body else, though she does look suited to her humble station, and has nothing of a genteel air about her." At the thoughts of gentility, the Wellington hat, and all the new ideas and wishes that her last night's visit had created in her mind, returned in full force, and she gave her sister a glowing description of the fine things she had seen and heard of. Rose was not quite so much elated by them as she had expected, and listened to it all with an indifference that quite provoked Sally.

" Well, you don't seem pleased, Rose, with what I've been telling you : don't you think Mrs. Rogers's niece is very clever, and very good-natured, and very genteel ? "

“ I really don’t know,” replied Rose, drily.

“ Oh yes you do, Rose, because I’ve told you how clever she is ; and her asking me to go there so often and work with her, *that* shews she’s good-natured ; and then every body may see how very *genteel* she is ; so its nonsense to say you don’t *know*, Rose. You mean, you don’t *like* her.”

“ I neither like nor dislike her, Sally ; I have not known her long enough.”

“ Well, if that is all, then,” continued Sally, “ you may soon know her better ; come with me this morning, Rose, I’m sure she’ll show you the Wellington hat, and every thing else.”

“ I cannot this morning, Sally, I have not time to spare.”

“ Dear me, what have you got to do ? I’m sure you’ve worked enough for one morning, however ; you might just come, if you was good-natured, Rose, just to please me for once.”

At this moment, little Betsy, with her book in her hand, made her appearance at the door.—“ My dear Sally,” said Rose, “ I hope I am not ill-natured ; but you see what I have got to do, and my reason for not

doing as you ask me." So saying, she opened the door for the little girl.

Sally was amazed at her sister, for being able to resist the pleasure of a sight of the milliner and her finery, merely for the purpose of staying at home to teach a child to read.

"And so you really won't go with me, because this little thing is come to say her lesson," said she.

"Hush," said Rose, as Betsy entered the room.

"Well, you certainly are the oddest girl in the world; I shall never be like you, I am afraid," continued Sally, as she shut the door.

As soon as she was gone, Rose sat quietly down to her lace-pillow, while Betsy, seated on a little stool at her feet, repeated her lesson. Nothing could exceed her eagerness to improve in reading, nor her gratitude to Rose for the pains she took to teach her; but she was very young, and of a very volatile disposition, and her attention was frequently attracted by the most trifling objects, so that Rose had sometimes need of all her patience and steadiness.

“ What is that white jar upon the mantle-piece for ?” said she to Rose, suddenly looking off from her book.

“ Never mind, Betsy, what it is for ; go on, and tell me what that word is.”

“ You might just tell me what it is for.”—

“ I will,” said Rose, “ if you finish this chapter without missing a word.”

“ There, then, I’ve done it, I’ve done it,” exclaimed the child, as she spelt the last word. “ Now tell me what that odd shaped thing is for.”

“ It is a jar to hold flowers, Betsy : it was given to my grandmother on her wedding-day, and it used to be full of flowers all the summer long,” said Rose, with a sigh.

“ And why are there no flowers in it now ?”

“ Because there are scarcely any in the garden, Betsy. When mother could stir about, and employ herself in the house, I used to take care of the garden, and have plenty of pretty flowers to fill it with ; but since she’s been so bad, I’ve had no time or thought to spare for flowers.”

“ Why does not Sally take care of them for you ?”

“ Oh Sally,—Sally, is not so fond of flowers as I am.”

“ Are you very fond of them ?”

“ Very fond, indeed,” said Rose.

Betsy was silent, but looked as if she had some great project in her head. Rose endeavoured in vain to recal her attention to her book ; she was evidently intent upon some other subject, and she therefore determined to give up the attempt till the next day.

“ You had better go home now, Betsy,” said she, “ for you will not mind what I say to you any longer.”

“ Dear Rose,” said the little girl, while the tears started into her eyes, “ I know I’m a very naughty girl ; but I’ll go home directly, and try to be very, very good to-morrow ; so kiss me, and forgive me, dear Rose.”

Betsy’s promise was accepted, and her pardon granted, after which she ran home as fast as she could.

CHAP. V.

Rose was pleased to find that when she sat down to work, her sister was prepared to do so likewise. She observed with satisfaction, that she seemed less disposed to talk and look out of the window than usual, and really believed that for once she was steadily intent upon the work she was about. This work was her Sunday gown, which she seemed to be going to mend ; but Rose was not a little astonished, when, after a short time, she perceived that she was diligently employed in pulling it entirely to pieces.

“ My dear Sally, what are you doing ? ” she said.

“ Time will shew,” replied Sally, with an air of mystery, “ time will shew, Rose.”

“ Must I wait for time to shew why you are pulling your best Sunday gown to pieces ? I am afraid I shall be very impatient,” said Rose, smiling.

“ Well, to tell you the truth, my dear Rose, for I will have no secrets from you, my

gown, which is now a mere plain, vulgar, common, ungenteel, unfashionable, ugly, every day——”

“ Dear me,” said Rose, interrupting her, “ I think it is a very nice tidy gown.”

“ Oh you think, Rose, but then you see you know nothing about the *fashions*, and what *genteel* people wear ; but you shall see what mine will turn out, when it is altered.”

“ How are you going to alter it, Sally ?”

“ Oh, I am not going to alter it *myself*, but dear good-natured Eliza has promised to alter it and do it up, so that I shall not know it again ; and she says that ladies wear stuffs, and red cloaks too, only they’re made up with an air of *fashion* like ; so she says if I’ll only give her some little trifle in return, she’ll do it up in the *military style*, with *buttons* and *epaulets*, and *hussar sleeves*, so that nobody will ever guess it to be the same gown ; and then when she has done mine, perhaps I shall be able to do yours by it, for I should wish you to look as well as me, Rose.”

“ Thank you,” answered Rose, very gravely, “ but I would rather wear mine as it is ; and if you will take my advice, you will not

alter yours, at least till you have asked mother about it.”

“ Dear me, Rose, what objection can my mother have? Surely if I do but take care of my gown, and make it last the proper time, it cannot signify how it is made: only think how nice it will be, when one goes into church, to feel one is dressed genteel, and like a lady, instead of being forced to hold one’s head down, because one’s ashamed of one’s gown!”

“ I for my part do not wish to look like a lady, Sally, and if I do hold my head down in church, it is not because I am ashamed of my gown, nor did I ever know that you were; I did not know you thought so much about your gown at church.”

“ No more I have yet, Rose; but I should next Sunday, because I know now how shabby it is, and I have learnt something about *fashion*, and so forth, and am not quite so ignorant and foolish as I was.”

“ Oh, my dear Sally, I am afraid you are not quite so wise!”

“ What do you mean, Rose?”

“ I will tell you plainly, Sally, I am afraid

you have learnt to think too much about *fashion*, and too little about duty. I think that a little while ago you were contented and happy, but that since you have had this new friend, you forget that you are not a lady, nor ever will be, and that therefore you need not try to look like one. We are very very well off in the world, thank God for it; as long as we are industrious, we need never come to want, and we have many blessings to be thankful for, but *fashion* and *gentility* can be no concern of either yours or mine, my dear Sally."

An unpleasant truth, plainly and fully revealed, that destroys at a stroke a favourite pleasure, is seldom well received at any age; at all events, it puts the affections of the speaker to a hard trial: Sally's love for her sister was warm and sincere; it stood this attack, almost the first it had ever encountered; and though she was much discomposed, and for some time very sulky, yet when she perceived, by the gentle and determined firmness of Rose, that she was in earnest, she yielded the point, and actually promised to give up the hussar sleeves and military gussets, together with the hopes of being genteel: to

cease to *wish* to be so, was not so easy.—She allowed that it was not likely she should ever look like a lady, nor even like a *milliner*, but she could not think of Eliza and all *elegancies*, without a secret feeling of admiration and envy.

“Open the door, open the door!” said a voice at the outside of the cottage, just as this conversation between the sisters was ended.

“Come in,” said Rose, who recognized Betsy’s little voice.

“I can’t open the door, my hands are so full.”

Sally ran to the door, and Betsy appeared holding in her little arms so huge a load of flowers, that her head was quite hid behind them. “Where shall I put them, Rose, for I can’t hold them any longer; they are all for you, Rose; where shall I put them?”

“Put them on the table, Betsy: dear! what beautiful flowers; where did you get them?”

“Why, when I went home last night, father was just going to supper; and he pulled out a song, that he said one of the servants at the great house had given him; a sort of a ballad, he said it was, and he

asked mother to read it to him, while he drank his beer, for he'd lay his life it was a bit of fun. But poor mother didn't seem to like the thoughts of fun, so she said she couldn't. Now I thought it was a pity, as father was in such a good humour, that he should be vexed and made angry about a song, so I just took it up to look at it.

“Leave that alone,” said my father, in an angry tone: “What should such a dunce as you do with a song?”

“I thought perhaps I could read it to you, father,” said I.

“Pooh, nonsense, said father;” and I was just going to put it down, when I looked at my mother, and she smiled, and nodded to me, and whispered to me to bid me try; so I took courage and began, and what do you think it was? why, the very same that you taught me, Rose; so I went through it without missing a word, and father was so surprised, and so pleased at my reading it so well (though, he said, there was not quite so much fun in it as he had expected), that he took me on his lap, and asked me a great many questions; and I told him all about how you had taught me, and how good you

had been ; and he said you were the best girl in the parish, and he wished he had any thing to give you : so I told him how fond you were of flowers, and all about the china jar, and he said, " Flowers ? is she fond of flowers, why then, my girl, you may take her to-morrow as many as you can gather." So I got up very early in the morning, for fear he should change his mind, and just as I was coming away he met me, and laughed at me, because he said I looked more like a clump of flowers than a little girl ; but he said I'd got none but common flowers after all, so he went up himself to one of the frames, and gathered this rose ; it is not quite so pretty as a pink rose, but it smells as sweet, so I hope you'll like it.

" A yellow rose, I declare," said Sally, " I never saw one before."

" Indeed, dear," said her sister, much pleased with the grateful offering, " I like it, and all of them extremely ; I think they are prettier, and smell sweeter than any I ever saw before : but let us make haste, and put them into water as quick as we can," said she, taking down the china jar, " for mother will be coming down stairs soon, and

it will surprise and please her to see the room look as gay and sweet as it used in happier days; it will cheer her spirits: do let us make haste," repeated Rose.

With willing hearts and nimble feet, they all sat about this pleasant task, and to do them justice, we must allow that some taste was displayed in the arrangement of the flowers: pink, blue, red, and purple, were so disposed as to relieve each other, and in the very middle, surrounded by its beautiful leaves, appeared the *yellow rose*.

Now what would Dame Rogers have given for the bit of luck that at this auspicious moment conducted Lady Rushford and Miss Lenox to the cottage of Rose Fielding?

CHAP. VI.

AT no time could Lady Rushford have entered Mrs. Fielding's cottage, without perceiving that neatness and good order, which so conspicuously prevailed ; but certainly, if ever it appeared to particular advantage, it was just at this moment, when, with affectionate eagerness the room had been put into "*apple-pie order*," by Rose Fielding, and ornamented with fresh and blooming flowers, for the purpose of giving pleasure to her mother. Our readers shall have the account of the visit, as given by Sally to Dame Rogers and her niece.

"Lawk-a-daisy, Sally," said the dame, "do come and tell us all about it : there have we been standing at our door, watch, watch, watch, and seen my Lady and Miss popping in at one door and then at another, all down the street, from one end to t'other, hoping to be sure they'd turn in upon us at last ; but no such good luck for us, though I've been a dreaming of it every night, and

Eliza's been ready, dressed as smart as could be, every day."

" Dear me," said her niece rather indignant, " she's only been paying visits of *charity*, I dare say ; she'll come to us when she goes a-shopping. She would not visit us as she does the *poor* folk."

" Would not she ?" said Dame Rogers with a sigh : " Ah, well, but la, Sally, do tell us a bit more news ; what, and so my Lady and little Miss both came in quite in an easy style like ;—well, and what did your mother and your grandmother say, and how did Rose look ? Wa'n't she sadly daunted to be tooked by surprise ?"

" Rose coloured up to her eyes," replied Sally, " but she did not seem much surprised or daunted."

" Lawk-a-daisy, think o' that, for all she looks so modest."

" Ah, there's no judging by people's looks," observed Eliza ; " I am sure I should have been quite overcome ;—but pray how was my Lady dressed ? was she all in vite with a long wail ?"

" Lawk, Eliza, never mind how she was.

dressed ; do let us hear what she talked about."

" Why, she asked us heaps of questions," said Sally ; " how long my poor mother had been lame ; and how much we earned by making lace ; and how old Rose was ? And then she said she wished all the cottages in the village were kept as neat and as clean as ours ; and begged to know how long we had lived in Missenden ? And then my poor grandmother looked so happy, and told her all how and about us a hundred years back, and what a good and noble lady my Lady Bloomfield used to be, and how she used to give prizes for lace-making ; and grandmother told how her mother and herself, and her daughter, had all won the prize, and how she'd got some of the lace on a cap now ; and what happy days they were when my Lady Bloomfield was alive ; and how she was afraid they'd never come again."

" Lawk, Sally, didn't that make my Lady angry ? What could make your granny tell her that old story for ?

" It was not old to my Lady, and did not seem to make her angry the least ; for she

smiled, and looked pleased, and said if my mother would give her leave, she would come and see us very often."

" Lawk, only think!"

" Well, but that was not all," said Sally, " for just as she was a-going away, Miss Lenox saw little Betsy's flowers a-top of the chimney-piece, and she seemed so surprised and so pleased, and she said in a low voice to my Lady, ' Its a yellow rose, a real yellow rose, I assure you.' Now I could not think what could make her so taken with a rose, because it happened to be yellow; but, thinks I to myself, to be sure sister will give it to her directly; but Rose would not give it, because it was poor little Betsy's present to her."

" Gracious me! Not present a flower to my Lady's own niece, because that little wal-gar thing had given it her."

" Well, but you shall hear," said Sally, " by means of poor Betsy, all the truth came out; and when my Lady heard who gave her the flowers, and how she had taught the poor child to read every day, and all about it, she seemed to take a great liking to Rose, and she told her she was to go to-

morrow to the great house, for she had something to say to her, and that she would not take away her yellow rose for the world, but she would call upon Betsy's father, as it was a very scarce flower, and she wanted one to put in her garden ; so," said she, " upon second thoughts, you had better bring Betsy with you, and then she will shew me the way to her father's house."

" There now, did you ever know the like of that ? there's *luck* for you ! So Rose and Betsy are to get a footing in the great house, and all because of a yellow rose, forsooth."

" To think they should be invited for such a *trumpery* reason," said Eliza, with a toss of her head ; " but however, it will be other folks's turn by and by, I believe. To-morrow's Sunday, thank my stars, and ven vonee ve shews ourselves, as ve should do, my Lady will find out who's who, and what's what, I believe ! "

Sunday, however, came, and though half the goods poor Dame Rogers possessed were cut up in order to produce the proper effect at once, and which her niece assured her would all answer in the *end*, yet Sunday

passed, and no notice was taken either of the new milliner or her niece.

On the Monday, however, to their inexpressible joy, Lady Rushford and Miss Lenox actually entered their shop. Mrs. Rogers retired to a corner, to leave it all to her more experienced niece, who she knew would shew off to better advantage without her; and there she stood, with her eyes wide open, simpering and rubbing her hands together in painful expectation, while Eliza displayed every article the shop contained. She placed one by one upon her own head, the hats, the scull caps, the mob caps, the tiaras, the Grecian bandeaus, the Roman fillets, the Scotch bonnets, the Sultana turbans, and last of all, the Wellington hat, declaring that they were all the sweetest, the elegantest, and most newest fashioned heads in town, and would all become her Ladyship so wonderfully vell ! If her Ladyship vould but try 'em on, she'd be conwinced at vonce.

“ Have you any plain straw bonnets, my good girl ? ” said Lady Rushford, in answer to this harangue.

There was no such thing to be found in

the shop, but a large assortment was expected down from town that very evening.

Lady Rushford promised to call again to chuse one. "In the mean time," said her Ladyship, "can you make me up a bonnet of the best materials, but perfectly plain?"

"Oh la, to be sure, my Lady—in the Spanish or Scotch style?"

"Neither," said Lady Rushford, smiling; "the cottage style, if you please, and perfectly plain."

"Oh, it shall be as plain as plain can be, my Lady, you may rely on it; your Ladyship has such elegant taste," said she, curtseying as Lady Rushford went out.

"Now vat a vhim this is for my Lady to take into her head! Plain indeed!" said Eliza, as she hung up her discarded finery. "People of fashion are alvays so full of vhims; but howsomever, aunt, this will do wastly vell for a beginning; she'll soon change her mind, I'll be bound for it, and now the hice is broke."

"But look," said Dame Rogers, interrupting her; "Lawk-a-daisy, Eliza, here's more customers a-coming."

"Oh, ve shall have all the volks a-coming

now fast enough, I'll warrant me ; but who is this woman, aunt ? she don't look of much signification ; but vone can't always be *sure*."

Mrs. Rogers had only time to whisper, Mrs. Priscilla Pemberton, before an elderly quaker lady made her appearance at the door.

" What, vould you give me leave to shew you this morning, Ma'am," said Eliza, in a doubtful tone.

" Friend, thou needest not trouble thyself to shew me any thing ; I do already see the finery that thy shop containeth, and verily there is none of it that suiteth the fashion of my dress."

" Wery likely, Ma'am," said Eliza, with a look of contempt, " for every thing *here* is of the *newest fashion*, from the most eleganteſt varehouse in all Lonnon."

" Child, thou hast no need to talk to me in that strain."

" Dear me," said Eliza, settling the long curls that hung on one side of her face, " Upon my vord, Ma'am, I don't understand you."

" I did not suppose, child, that thou could'st understand me till I had explained

myself; listen to me, therefore, and I will do so briefly."

"Some years ago, when my residence was within the great metropolis, I happened to discover the extreme poverty and distress which thy poor mother then laboured under."

"Poverty and distress!" exclaimed Mrs. Rogers in astonishment: "Lawk, Eliza, what can she mean?"

"The lady mistakes me for some other person, I suppose; it can't possible be *my* mother as she's a-talking of, vone of the first, very first, fancy-dress and corset-makers."

"Friend Betty," interrupted Mrs. Priscilla Pemberton in a stern voice, "utter no more of these deceitful vanities in my hearing, for I have told thee they are of no avail."

"Vell, if you only vish to hinsult and wound my feelings," cried Eliza, bursting into a fit of crying, "I must beg leave to go out of the vay."

"Lawk-a-daisy, don't go off in such a hurry, Eliza; do you know," whispered Mrs. Rogers, "that Mrs. Priscilla Pem-

berton is as rich as a queen, and as generous,—so come, a-done crying, dear, do."

"Poor thing," pursued the Quaker, in a tone of compassion, "thou hast some cause to weep; but I do not mean to insult, but to serve thee. When I had restored thy poor mother's health, and supplied her purse from my own, I did recommend and charge her, for her own and her daughter Betty's sake, to change her way of life, and to bring her up in the plain and direct road of truth and industry. She took my money, but did reject my counsel; she has taught thee, poor deluded child, and young as thou art, too perfectly hast thou learned, alas! the worst of lessons—to set thy whole heart upon the follies and vanities of this wicked world, and to pursue them through the intricate mazes of deceitfulness. But, Betty, it is not yet too late to turn thee from the error of thy ways: put off those gaudy trappings from thy person, and at the same time that thou dost clothe thyself in modest apparel, put on also the virtues of humility and meekness: speak at all times the truth from thy heart, and labour diligently in thy calling. Let me but behold thee acting upon this ad-

vice, and I will then prove to thee, that I am both willing and able to be thy friend. Here, Betty, in this parcel," continued the quaker, deliberately unfolding it, "I have brought—

Mrs. Rogers jogged Eliza by the elbow, who now for the first time removed her handkerchief from her eyes.

"I have brought some brown silk, such as persons of my persuasion use; I would have thee make it for me by the pattern that is with it, and bring it to me with all due dispatch, observing that the plaits be neatly folded. Good woman," continued she, addressing herself to Dame Rogers, "you, who are now, I suppose, the guardian of this poor young woman, see, I pray thee, and direct her in the faithful performance of this task."

We must pass over the consternation of the poor Dame at this last address of Mrs. Priscilla Pemberton: we will also omit a description of the indifferent air with which her niece affected to turn off the mortification of this visit; carelessly huddling the brown silk into a drawer already too full to shut, and muttering all the time;—"She knew from the first she was nobody of any signif-

ection ; brown silk, indeed ! nothing but an old-fashioned brown gown after all—no, truly, my Lady Rushford's milliner,” continued she, as she sat herself to work at the cottage bonnet, “ has other things to think of, I warrant, than quakers and their wagaries.”

CHAP. VII.

It is not easy to describe the pride and delight with which Rose's grandmother ~~be~~ held her neatly arrayed in her best attire, preparing to set out upon her visit to the Lady at the great house. She was delighted with Lady Rushford, for the notice with which she had honoured her darling, and as the truth must be confessed, she was the more pleased from its not having been extended to Sally.

“ Ah, I thought how it would be ; I told you from the first it would not do to go on so ; I knew that Sally would never be minded or noticed, or do herself or her friends a bit of credit. People may see the difference between her and her sister with half an eye, I warrant.”

But to do Sally justice, we must observe that the pain and mortification with which she heard these observations, was wholly unmixed with the slightest particle of envy.

“ Dear Rose,” said she with affectionate

zeal, as she helped her to prepare for her visit, "I am glad you are going to those good ladies; I am glad to think they will see and know your goodness, and love you as you deserve to be loved. As for me, I know what a silly idle girl I am, and how little worthy to be your sister. I do not expect that Lady Rushford will ever take any notice of me, but I do hope, dear Rose," said she, as the tears started into her eyes, "I do hope that I shall not always make my mother unhappy. She does not blame me half so much as I deserve, and when my grandmother is scolding me, she does not join her in making the worst of my faults, but only looks unhappy. Ah Rose, do you know I had rather be scolded for an hour than see one of those looks from my mother:—what would I give to prove to her, to quite convince her, that I wish to improve, that I long to be like you, and to be a comfort to her;—ah, if she did but know all I now feel!"

"Continue to feel as you do now, dear Sally," said Rose, "and nothing will be wanting to my mother's comfort. I shall have very little pleasure in going any where without you; and as mother is so poorly to-

day, I had rather by half have staid at home ; but I know you will take good care of her, Sally, and I shall not be long before I come back again. Good-bye, dear Sally, be sure you do not leave my mother."

"Leave her!" said Sally, as she ran up to her mother's room, "no, not for the King's crown would I leave her for a moment."

Mrs. Fielding drew aside her bed-curtain, and saw her daughter Sally seated in the little wicker-chair by her bed-side, neatly dressed, and diligently employed.

"Sally, my dear," said she, holding out her hand to her, "you will one day be another Rose to me, will you not, dear?"

Sally burst into tears, and could make no answer, but her mother was satisfied, and she felt happier than she had been for a long time.

About an hour after this, she was called down stairs by some one who wanted to speak with her. It was her friend Eliza, who, having completed my Lady Rushford's bonnet, was in the act of carrying it herself to the great house, but would not go by Miss Sally's home without calling in at a venture, to ask her to go with her. She no sooner

heard that Rose was already gone there, and that Sally was left behind, than she exclaimed against the cruelty and unfairness of such a proceeding ; " but however, my dear, I'll introduce you if you'll come," said she.

Sally thought her very good-natured for this offer, but for once she was steady in adherence to her duty, and persisted in refusing to leave her mother.

" Well, my dear, do as you please," said her friend ; " but if you can't go, you *shall* take a peep at my Lady's bonnet, however. There," said she, (lifting up the lid of the ~~hand~~-box), " I dare say the next time when she walks through the village, we shall see her in it ; and you'll be sure to know it again, shan't you ? and you can tell every body where it comes from, you know, as you're my friend."

Sally promised to perform this act of friendship, and Eliza pursued her way.

If affectation and folly can have any claim to pity, our readers will perhaps be disposed to feel a degree of that sentiment for Eliza, when, soon after her return from the great house, as she was standing idly looking out at the shop door, she saw Rose Fielding

walking quietly home with the very identical bonnet upon her head. We will not, however, dwell upon the bitter feelings of such a moment, as our readers will be better pleased to follow Rose to her cottage, and to fancy the satisfaction with which she will relate every circumstance of her visit.

The bonnet was recognized with surprise by Sally, and viewed by the whole party with much pleasure, as a gift of Lady Rushford's. But Rose had more important intelligence to communicate, and she begged her grandmother to seat herself comfortably in the arm chair, for that she had a great deal to tell her.

“ You must know then,” said she, “ that Lady Rushford means to set up the Lace Schools again, just the same as they were in your younger days, dear grandmother, and she means to be the patroness herself, and to give prizes, just the same as good old Lady Bloomfield did ; and she says she must call upon you to know all the particulars of how it used to be, and she hopes that I and Sally shall be amongst the number of the lace-makers.”

“ Aye, so you shall, my own dear girl,” said the old woman, jumping up from the

arm-chair, as if she had been young again ; “ you shall be one, and one that wins the prize, I’ll warrant me,” pursued she : “ Oh this is better news than ever I expected to have heard again in this world : God bless the Lady for it. And did she say that it should be the same as it used to be ? And shall I see all those happy days come over again ? ” said the poor old woman, wiping the tears from her eyes as she spoke.

“ My Lady said all this, and a great deal more, and she means to come to-morrow morning to settle all about it.”

Lady Rushford was faithful to her promise, and on the morrow, having patiently listened to a lengthened detail from the old woman, of every circumstance, material and immaterial, relating to the Lady Bloomfield’s Lace-school, she made all the necessary arrangements for reviving it upon the original plan.

“ I admire,” said she, (while the eyes of the old woman sparkled with joy, and every body listened with attention), “ I admire and approve the benevolence and wisdom of Lady Bloomfield’s institution, and I wish as

nearly as possible to follow so benevolent an example."

It was now publicly made known through all the village of Missenden, that my Lady Rushford intended to re-establish the school. The room allotted to this purpose was cleared out and white-washed. New benches were made with the utmost expedition, and every thing was prepared and put in the highest order. A day was fixed upon for the distribution of prizes, and a woman was appointed to keep the key of the room, and to superintend the whole, which was to be conducted on the following plan :

The school was to be open to as many girls as chose to work in it ; but all who did so, were required to give in their names on a particular day, when they would each receive a new lace pillow, bobbins, &c. complete, with their name, age, and place of abode marked upon the back of it. These pillows were always to remain in the school, which was to be open for a certain number of hours every day, and to be locked up every evening.

On the day appointed, the lace pillows were to be examined by the judges. If a

piece of lace were found to be unfinished, or deficient in the length determined upon, the maker of such lace was to have her name taken off from the pillow, and to be excluded for a twelvemonth from the school; while, on the other hand, the fortunate girl whose name was attached to that piece of lace which should be impartially pronounced the best made, of the most beautiful pattern, and complete in breadth and length, would receive from the hands of Lady Rushford herself, *the highest prize*; while the second would be bestowed by Miss Lenox, upon her whose *edging* stood highest in the order of merit, according to the same rules.

“ Now, Sally,” said Rose, as they walked together to give in their names, “ now you will have an opportunity of proving to my mother and grandmother all you wish: you are a very good lace-maker, so you have nothing to do but to persevere steadily, and you will have as good a chance of gaining the prize as any body.”

“ How kind, how good you are to say so, dear Rose: as to the first, I have not the least chance; because, of course, you will deserve that; you who are the cleverest, and at the same

time the most persevering and industrious girl in the village : Oh you must have the highest prize, you will, I'm sure."

" Don't be too sure, Sally, for fear I should be disappointed ; I am sadly afraid, my dear mother, and still more my grandmother, will make themselves *too sure* that I shall gain the prize ; they will set their hearts too much upon it ; and though this will make me do my very best, it must be very uncertain ; for I have not a great deal of time to spare, and there are several older girls than I am, who are such expert hands : Rachel Skinner, you know, especially."

" Oh, that odious ill-tempered girl ; do not mention her, I beg you."

" Her temper, you know, dear Sally, will have nothing to do with her success in this case. The prize will be given impartially to her who makes the completest piece of lace."

" Ah, well, that will be Rose Fielding, I will be bound for it ;—and if her poor sister Sally thought, that by striving with all her might and main, she had but any chance of coming in for the second prize, she would be thankful and contented enough."

By this time they had reached the room

in which were already assembled a number of the girls ; and the first thing they heard was a shrill voice calling out, " Please to set down my name :—Rachel, Rachel Skinner, if you please."

" All in good time," was the answer.

CHAP. VIII.

FROM this time little was talked of in the village but the new school. Mothers were seen with anxious faces, exhorting their girls to diligence, and imposing on themselves double exertions in their families, to allow their daughters plenty of time for a fair trial of skill. Various were the conjectures, with respect to which girl was most likely to obtain the prize. Almost every mother hoped and expected her own daughter would be the favoured candidate; but those who were not so much concerned in the event, seemed to think there were only two between whom there could be any competition, and these two were, Rose Fielding and Rachel Skinner. The wishes of almost every one were for Rose, but the probability was thought to be in Rachel's favour; "Because," said they all, "she has nothing else in the wide world to attend to, and is so proud and envious, that she is at it from morning till night, for fear any one else should get before her; whereas

poor Rose will persist in staying and helping her mother, settling matters at home, and seeing her seated comfortably by the fireside, before she'll stir, though her old grandmother fidgets and fumes herself to death almost all the time. Now Rose is a main good hand at her pillow, but all them there hindrances must tell against her in the end: and then there's the gardener's daughter, little Betsy Dawkins, why she's got leave of my Lady to take her into the school with her of a day, sooner than give up larning her to read; and so there she sits, they tell me, all the time that Rose is at work, spelling her book ! La, bless us ! who can make lace and teach larning at the same time ? Then, there's her sister Sally, why, they say, she spends a deal of time in giving her advice ; and truly she seems to have done her a power of good, for she who was once the idlest gad-about in the parish, sits now to her work, day after day, as busy as a bee, and I hear as how she's no bad chance of the second prize."

" What ! Sally Fielding ? no, never, take my word for it," cried another, " its only a sudden fit of notableness, and she'll soon take another quite the contrary, I'll be bound

for her. She industrious ! She gain a prize ! Not till the sky falls, and we catch larks for supper ; but we shall see, we shall see."

Of the accuracy or inaccuracy of these predictions, our readers can only judge by the event : we must, however, inform them, that the account of Sally's improvement was strictly true, and that before half the allotted time was elasped, she had advanced more than half way through a very pretty and promising piece of edging.

" Its all you, its all you, Rose," she kept repeating, " its you who persuade and encourage me, and help me to it ; I should never have done half as much but for your advice ; but I think, as it is, I'm *pretty sure* ; don't you ? I don't mean sure of the *prize*, but sure of finishing my edging in time, so there's no chance of my name being taken out of the list, or my being sent away for a twelvemonth, or any thing of that sort."

" I hope not, indeed, Sally, but it must depend upon yourself, you know."

" Oh now, don't spoil all my pleasure, with one of those grave looks and speeckles of yours, Rose ; don't damp my spirits, sister ; I have never yet looked off my work,

from the time I have begun of a day, till you are ready to go home : I could do no more, you know, Rose, if I were Rachel herself."

Rose was beginning to reply, when, at this very moment the beating of a drum was heard at a distance. The busy fingers of the whole assembly were stopped in an instant by a sound so unusual. It became louder and louder, and the tones of other martial instruments were soon distinguished.

"Gracious me, what can it be!" exclaimed Sally, involuntarily starting up.

"Sit still, Sally," said Rose.

"Sally, Sally!" said a voice from the street, "make haste, come here directly!"

Sally flew towards the door, and Rose (like her guardian angel, ever on the watch to save her from temptation) left her work and followed her, to persuade her to come back. But when the door was opened, the whole street was seen to be in an uproar, and every body standing out at their doors, to see a regiment of soldiers who happened to be passing through the village, in their way to the neighbouring town.

The band was playing, and the colours flying, and the sight was altogether so irre-

sistibly attractive to the whole school, that in a few minutes they all crowded to the door, all but Rachel, who, finding herself thus distinguished, sat swelling with pride and conceit in the same upright position as before, perseveringly twisting her bobbins with her fingers, without moving a muscle in any other part.

In the mean while the soldiers marched on, and when the last of the file turned the corner at the end of the street, most of the girls returned to their work, and Rose requested Sally to do so immediately; but at this moment, some one seized her by the arm; she turned round, and beheld her friend Eliza Burrows, who, having observed the soldiers halt for refreshment just at the village, had run home to dress, and now, therefore, appeared smarter than ever for the occasion. In despair of finding a purchaser in the village of Missenden, for the superb Wellington hat, she had ventured, when she perceived the military entering, to place it upon her own head, and the effect was certainly not a little striking.

“Come along with me, my dear creature,” said she, dragging Sally by the arm,

“ and we'll follow 'em along the road ; I'll take you under my wing, and we shall hear the vind instruments all the vay we goes.”

Sally looked doubtfully at Rose.

“ You will not leave your work so early in the day, surely, Sally ?”

“ Only for *once*, Rose ; you know I have never done so before, and therefore I can afford to lose an hour or two for *once*.”

“ Oh, Sally, who can say it will only be for once ?”

“ Oh, I am *sure* I shall not *wish* to do so again ; the same thing is not likely to happen any more, Rose ; soldiers may not come into the village again for these hundred years.”

“ Temptation may come any day,” observed Rose, “ and no matter in what shape, if you cannot resist it.”

“ Vell, Miss Sally, when your sister has done sermonising you, may be you'll come to some resolve, but for my part, I can vajt no longer ; so if you vish to come with me and hear the band, and see the soldiers, vhy its all vell and good.”

“ I do wish it, I do indeed ; I'll come directly—Dear Rose,” said she, half turning

back to her sister, “trust me this time, only indulge me to-day, and you shall see how I'll make up for it to-morrow.”

Indulge myself to-day, and make up for it to-morrow!—We would stop here for the young reader's sake, to comment upon so fatal a system, but that we trust the light in which its victim necessarily appears throughout this simple history of village manners and village morals, sufficiently exposes its folly and danger.

CHAP. IX.

As Sally and her friend walked on, they were so much attracted by the red coats and the sound of the vind instruments, that they unconsciously followed them till the town to which they were marching, made its appearance.

“ My goodness,” exclaimed Sally, suddenly starting, “ how far we are come ! I did not mean to go half this distance : do let us go back, Eliza, directly.”

“ Dear me, vhy should ve hurry ourselves, now as ve’ve nobody to vatch us ? but I suppose you’re afraid of vhat your old maid of a sister vill say to you.”

Sally could not refrain from expressing a warm resentment at this ridicule of her sister.

“ Dear me,” cried Eliza, half afraid she had ventured too far, “ I don’t mean to disparage her no vays. I dare say she is viser and more wirtuouser, and I’m sure I thinks her better behaved than any body else in the world : I only mean to say, I thank my stars

I have no sister to domineer over me, and that I may venture to take a walk when and where I likes."

"And so may I," eagerly interrupted Sally, at this moment foolishly feeling ashamed of her greatest merit, namely, her submission to her wise and affectionate sister.

Misguided and faulty characters, however foolish they may be themselves, have generally sense enough to discern superiority in others ; and discerning, seldom fail to envy and to calumniate. A very short acquaintance had been sufficient to shew Eliza the difference between the two daughters of Mrs. Fielding ; and several circumstances had concurred to mark out the exemplary Rose as the innocent and unsuspecting object of her envy and dislike ; but from the moment when she beheld her with the fatal *bonnet* upon her head, that bonnet upon which so many absurd speculations had been built, she became her decided and bitter enemy, eagerly looking out for some opportunity of revenge.

Eliza had observed the affectionate earnestness which Rose had expressed for Sally's gaining one of the prizes, and immediately determined to employ all the art she was

mistress of, to counteract her progress, and prevent it.

She began by making Sally believe that she was extremely fond of her; and since the Lace-school first began, she had several times endeavoured to attract her from it by the most pressing invitations: these had hitherto proved ineffectual, but the temptation of the *military band* at length proved favourable to her views.

Poor Sally, once detached from her sister, and above all, open to the attacks of ridicule, she considered now as within her power, and determining to make the most of the present opportunity, she contrived, partly by persuasion and entreaties, partly by threats, but chiefly by ridicule, to draw from Sally a promise that she would accompany her the next day in a second expedition to the town of Amersham, so that, when Rose remonstrated in the most earnest manner against it, she had her promise to plead as an excuse, in answer to every argument she could suggest.

Who among the most wary can foresee, if prevailed upon to take one step out of the plain direct road to duty, how far they may

be forced to wander, before they can return to the safe and hitherto well known path !

No sooner had Sally and her companion entered the town, than their eyes were caught by some bills, which a man was assiduously putting into the hands of people as they walked along. Eliza took one, and read with an ecstasy of delight :

- ‘ THEATRE, AMERSHAM,
- ‘ On Wednesday Evening,
- ‘ After the Grand Review, will be performed,
- ‘ never acted here,
- ‘ An entire new Melo Drame called,
- ‘ KING LEAR.
- ‘ To which will be added,
- ‘ A FARCE,
- ‘ In which several of the Officers of the 58th Regiment will perform : in the course of the evening, a New Song, after which will be introduced—’
- “ Mercy on us,” cried Sally, “ what a quantity of things !”
- “ Yes, and all for the value of such a trifle.
- ‘ Boxes, two shillings—Pit, one shilling—Gallery, sixpence.’ ”

“ Well, if I had any money, I would rather give it to go to the play, than any thing in the whole world,” said Sally.

“ Vell, my dear, I’m glad to see ve are of a similarity of thinking ; ve’ll manage it some way or other, I’ll be bound.”

“ Manage it!” cried Sally, in astonishment ; “ I’m sure I shall never get my mother’s leave to go ; so if that’s what you mean by managing it, I’m certain there’s not the least chance.”

“ Oh, never fear, my dear, when I sets my mind upon any thing, I’ve more vays than vone of bringing it about : trust to me, Sally, I’ll get your mother’s leave, or teach you ow to take *French leave*, which is the visest vay hafter all.”

Sally did not quite understand the last part of this speech ; but she thanked her dear Eliza again and again for her kindness and good nature, though she still thought she had no chance of going to the play.

“ Vell, my dear, all I hask in return for what you call my good nature, is that you will not at present say a vord to any of your friends about this charming plan of ours,

hespecially your sister Rose, who must know nothing about the matter; let the thing drop hentirely; don't so much as 'int hat it when a-talking with her, but be sure to meet me hevery day at vone o'clock at the vest gate by the Lodge, and I'll let you know ow all things are going on."

"I don't think I dare keep my mother and Rose in the dark about it," answered Sally, "for if it should at last come to light, it would make them miserable to find me capable of such deceit; and as to the play, I am sure mother will not let me go; and I know it will be impossible for me to go to you every day, because the hour you mention is just the time that I go with Rose to the Lace-school."

"Ah, there it is, the hold story, 'I can't come here, and I can't go there, because of Rose, and for fear of Rose.' Vhat right in the world has vone sister to keep another hunder her thumb in such a vay, I'd be glad to know?"

"Oh, but Rose is the kindest of friends!"

"Oh, very vell, my dear, I'm wastly glad to hear it; then I'm sure you've no need of



any other friends : nobody else's kindness or goodnature is to be thought at all about, I suppose ; it is worth nothing at all !”

“Indeed, indeed, that is not what I mean,” said Sally ; “your goodness is thought of, and will never be forgotten by me. I am very grateful to you, for—”

“Oh dear no—pray don't talk of being grateful, if you can't go vone hinch out of your vay, or rather out of your sister Rose's vay, I should say, to oblige me.”

“I will do any thing you desire,” interrupted Sally, weakly yielding herself to the power of her artful companion.

“Oh, I shall not desire you, you may depend ; its nothing to me, I can go to the play, and take my walks, and find girls enough who will be glad to be my companions, I believe. It was only for your sake that I made such a proposal ; so pray take your hown choice, and give up the thing altogether, if you prefer it. To be sure I did think vhat a nice scheme ve might have 'ad, quite in a friendly secret confiding sort of a style like ; but I'll never set my heart upon any thing again,” continued Eliza, affect-

ing to sob, “ for its only vanity and vexation.”

“ Oh, pray do not say so,” said Sally, beginning to cry in her turn, “ do not say so: let us be friends, and I’ll never vex you any more: I’ll take care to meet you every day, and you shall see I am not ungrateful.”

“ And you’ll promise to keep it all an inviolable secret?”

“ I promise faithfully,” said Sally.

Eliza now exulted silently in the success of her plan: “ I have her now,” thought she to herself, “ and I shall have all the pleasure of the play, and the review into the bargain: let me see what I shall wear.”

Before this important question could be decided in her mind, she arrived at the door of the shop, where a reception no less unpromising than it was unexpected awaited her—Mrs. Rogers was standing at the door, crying and wringing her hands.

“ Lawk-a-daisy me, what will become of me! Where have you been all this time, you good-for-nothing idle girl?” was her first and vehement exclamation: “ you think of nothing but dressing yourself up, and jaunting

out of doors, and leaving me to shift for myself : Oh it was the worst of ill luck when first I took you into my house ; you'll ruin me, you'll ruin me, I tell you !”

Eliza stood in silent consternation, while Dame Rogers went on to explain by degrees, that her landlord had demanded the rent that was due, and that when she came to look into her concerns, she found that every farthing she possessed was insufficient to pay it ; and unless she could make up the money by the next day, he threatened to seize all the goods in her shop.

“ Oh Lawk, what can us do !”

“ What can us do, indeed,” repeated Eliza, in a disconsolate tone, as the thoughts of the review and the play, and the triumph she had gained over Sally, recurred to her mind.

“ Aunt, whare there’s a vill there’s a vay,” exclaimed Eliza, (suddenly recollecting the despised and long neglected brown silk gown of Mrs. Pemberton), “ ve’ll set about and make it up, and she’ll pay us the money, I dare say, in no time,” continued she, as she rummaged first in one drawer, and then another. It was long, however, before it

could be found amongst the countless bits and scraps and rubbish of various kinds which they contained, and when at last it was dragged forth, it was in so tumbled and soiled a condition, that even Dame Rogers herself beheld it with some concern ; and she went on fretting and upbraiding, and crying and scolding, and lamenting, by turns, and sometimes all in a breath, while Eliza smoothed and damped, and ironed, and spent an hour in vainly endeavouring to repair the mischief, which a minute's trouble at the proper time might have prevented.

“ La, it will never be seen when it comes to be made up,” said Eliza at last ; and with this only remaining hope she sat to the job.

It was by this time, however, so late, that she was obliged to work all night, in order to get it done by the morning ; but the hopes excited by her scheme were sufficiently powerful to keep up her spirits, and by the time it was light, she had finished the gown, which she neatly ornamented with frogs and tassels, quite to her own satisfaction.

“ Be sure to charge it high,” said Dame Rogers in a low voice, looking over Eliza’s

shoulder, as she scrawled upon a piece of paper intended for a bill.

“Never fear,” replied Eliza, as she went out at the door; “I’ll wheedle the good lady out of enough, you may be sure.”

“

CHAP. X.

Mrs. PRISCILLA PEMBERTON was an early riser, and she was seated at her breakfast table, in a small parlour, where every thing was like herself, the picture of cleanliness and order, when the servant brought her word that a young woman wanted to speak to her. She laid down the book she was reading, and raised her eyes as the door opened and Eliza made her appearance.

Eliza was in the same absurd and tawdry dress which she had put on the day before, for her expedition to the town of Amersham; but the pale wanness which sitting up all night to work had occasioned, gave an air the most deplorable to her whole personal appearance.

Mrs. Priscilla Pemberton beheld her with a mixture of sorrow and indignation, while Eliza, endeavouring to forget the mortification of her last interview with this Lady, put on her best airs and graces. "She was very much consarned," she began, "that Mrs.

Pemberton should have waited so long for the dress ; but that, upon her vord, they had had so much vork fall in, and the lady was in such a monstrous urry, that it had been impossible any vay to get it finished sooner ; but she had the wanity to hope Mrs. Pemberton vould be vell satisfied, and think the charge the most reasonablest in the vorld."

Mrs. Pemberton took the gown and the bill from her hands, and examining first one and then the other, "Betty," said she, "thy bill is beyond the bounds of moderation ; and for the gown, thou hast entirely spoiled it : go home, therefore, and as I see thou art not the better for my advice, do not come unto me again ; the sight of thee is afflicting and displeasing to me."

Eliza could not support this heavy disappointment : she burst into an agony of crying, and sunk into a chair :—"I have worked all night," said she, "to save myself and my aunt from ruination ; but where shall I go, or what shall I do ?"

The voice of distress, however well deserved, never failed to make its way into the heart of this good old lady.

"Friend," said she, (after she had en-

quired more particularly into the cause of her grief), “ Neighbour Betty, the gown I cannot wear; thou hast soiled the dainty lustre of the silk, and bedizened it with the most ridiculous finery: do what thou wilt with it, therefore, for to me it cannot serve the purpose of a garment, being the same as nothing; but take for thy distress this sum of money,” continued she, putting two guineas into her hand; “ it will relieve thee from thy present peril, but not from that which must await thee, if thou dost continue thy sinful course. Whenever thou shalt repent thee, and turn thee from this mode of life, I will receive thee as my friend; but till that time I would rather that thou shouldst keep thyself out of my way:—fare thee well!”

“ Well, so as I have got the money,” thought Eliza to herself, “ I shan’t break my heart, if I never do enter thy presence again. Let me see, this sum will do for all purposes. I shall give my aunt all she expects and must instantly pay to her landlord; and as for the rest, vhy, it vill be very convenient for my own expences at the review and the play; and for sartain, what my aunt never had, vhy she can never miss; so there

can't be no harm in the world, in just reserving a few shillings, as I may say."—With these intentions she returned home.

My young readers will be shocked at the entire want of principle displayed in the conduct of this unhappy girl: but they must remember that Eliza laboured under the misfortune of having been ill brought up, and at this time was destitute of a friend to apply to for counsel or guidance on any trying occasion.

If Sally Fielding should fail, for her no such excuses can be made.

Sally reached her own door, after her walk to Amersham, at the very same moment with her sister Rose, who had been to the school, and hard at work.

"I'm glad you're come home, dear Sally," said Rose, as they entered the house together.

"Here they come, here they come," exclaimed the old grandmother; "I begin to see, dear daughter," observed she to Mrs. Fielding, "how much in the wrong I have been all this time. You have always desired me to have patience with poor Sally, and to allow her time to grow wiser; but I must

needs own, I was always a passionate, hasty old woman, and never had patience with any body ; but I see now that Sally's beginning to be just like Rose. There they go every day together to the school, as regular as the day comes ; God bless their young hearts, that's what they do.—Well, dears, how does the lace come on ? Hey ! why, you need not hold down your heads and colour so, as if I was a-going to scold you : but you want to surprise me, I'll warrant, and not tell me a word about it till the prize day comes on. Well dears, I'll try and wait patient, if I can."

" Do, dear grandmother," said Rose, " wait till the day comes round, and then," continued she, looking earnestly at Sally " I hope you will be pleased and satisfied. I hope and trust we shall all be satisfied."

Sally's heart beat quick with gratitude to Rose, as she pronounced this speech.—" I shall never dare to let her know that I am to meet Eliza to-morrow," thought she, " and again every day till Wednesday se'nnight ; however, she need not know it, for it's only to be for one minute, just to speak to her, so that *can* be no hindrance to signify."

If young persons, possessing kind and ju-

dicious friends ever on the watch to guard them from dangers and temptations, become the victims of the wicked and designing, it is to be presumed their misfortune has been effected by their having been induced to use concealment towards those inestimable monitors. If they are once persuaded to commit this first and leading error, they have forsaken that secure shelter that protected them, and given their enemies a power over them, which will in all probability be employed to their destruction.

It was unusual for poor Sally to have a single thought which she could not reveal to her sister Rose ; but she had now new hopes, new wishes, new plans, not one of which she was at liberty to communicate, or even to seem to think of, before her.

“ My dear Sally, what are you thinking of ? ” said Rose, innocently.

“ Me ! ” said Sally, starting, “ dear, why should you suppose I was thinking of any thing Rose, at least any thing in particular. I am sure I haven’t said a word.”

“ That is the very thing I mean,” replied Rose smiling, “ you haven’t spoken a word. this half hour.”

“Haven’t I? Well, let us talk now then; but what shall we talk about, Rose? I cannot think of any thing to say.”

“That is not often your case, Sally; but do as you like best: do not try to talk to me unless you like it.”

“Oh Rose, I do like it, but—”

“But what? dear Sally,” said Rose, with a look so kind and good-natured that Sally was upon the point of telling her all about it; but the dreaded anger of her friend Eliza presented itself at this moment to her imagination, and she hastily turned the conversation.

When Rose was ready to go to the Lace-school the next morning, little Betsy, who always went with her, had not made her appearance at the door, as usual, with her basket of little books. Sally had been eagerly endeavouring to find some excuse for not going at the same time with Rose, that she might be able to effect the promised meeting with Eliza unperceived by her: she was glad, therefore, that little Betsy afforded her so favourable an opportunity, and she insisted with Rose, that she would run to the gardener’s house to enquire the reason of her

absence, and bring her, if she were well, to the school.

Satisfied with this proposal, Rose walked forward, and Sally, satisfied with seeing her out of sight, went as quickly as possible to the western gate of the lodge, and for the present thought of nothing but reviews and plays, and regiments, and military bands.

Eliza was so very glad to see her;—so pleased to find that she had kept her appointment; she had so many things to tell her;—to ask her;—so much to consult her about;—and so many directions to give;—that a whole hour glided away before Sally once recollect ed that she did not intend to stay five minutes: then starting with the painful recollection, she ran as fast as she could to the school, where she found Rose and all the other girls busily going on with their work.

“ What has been the matter, Sally ? ” asked Rose with a look of anxiety; “ what has made you so long, and what have you done with little Betsy ? ”

Poor Sally ! till the present moment, no thought of little Betsy had entered her mind from the time that Rose had left her:

what was she now to do? She must either confess the whole truth, or disguise it by a falsehood. There was no time for deliberation, and she resolved upon this fatal expedient; but she was hitherto unpractised in deceit, and any body even less unsuspicious than Rose, would have observed her awkward confusion and burning cheeks, as she stammered out that she had been to the gardener's house, but that Betsy could not come with her, because she was ill in bed.

Poor Rose was struck with surprise and grief, when, soon after, the falsehood of her sister was proved to her by the sudden appearance of Betsy, whom, as Rose and Sally were walking homewards, they perceived jumping over a stile with cheeks as rosy and eyes as bright as usual: she flew up to them, and in her own artless manner accounted for her absence from school.

“ My father,” said she, “ sent me to the farmer's upon the hill, and I was not to come back till he had given me his answer to father's message, and as he was busy, he kept me waiting so long, that—” ‘ but you're not attending to what I am telling you,

Rose,' cried the little girl suddenly stopping in her history.

Rose was indeed at this moment absorbed by one only feeling, and that of the most painful kind. She burst into tears without speaking a word. Betsy looking up sorrowfully in her face, walked on by her side in silence, and Sally, with all the regret which weak-minded people are too apt to feel only when their faults are discovered, followed at a little distance. As she proceeded, she endeavoured to stifle the uneasy sensations of shame and remorse that grew in her bosom, by seeking out pretences and excuses for her conduct ; and more than once she recollects her friend Eliza's remarks of decision, upon the way in which she was made to submit to her sister upon all occasions :—after all, thought she, what is the mighty harm I have done ? nobody but Rose will ever know any thing about it, and why need I mind what Rose thinks or does about it.

CHAP. XI.

As Sally drew nearer to her mother's cottage, however, she unconsciously slackened her pace, so that Rose and Betsy arrived there before she had turned the corner of the street: at this moment she was met by the very person who was uppermost in her thoughts.

“ Mercy on us,” exclaimed Eliza, “ what a melancholy visage, why, my dear creature, what is the matter, and what are you a thinking of? not of our scheme, I’m sure, for that’s a going on as smooth as hoil! Come, come, my dear, I shall not tell you all the secrets I have got for you, till I know what’s in the vind, and what you’re a veeping about.”

“ I am very unhappy,” replied Sally, “ but I cannot tell you what is the matter.”

“ Wery vell, my dear, then I’ll lay my life I can guess, and that vill do for all the world as vell.”

“ You will never guess,” rejoined Sally.

“ I’ll be bound to forfeit my best wail if I do not guess it at vonce : all this voe, all this shocking and vicked affair, is something that has been done, or looked, or said, or *not* done, or *not* looked, or *not* said, that my sister Rose is angry with me for : isn’t this well guessed now, hey ?—Oh, I see I’m right by that smile ; I thought I should soon change your veeping into smiling ; but goodness me, my dear, when vill you leave off wexing yourself for nothing at all, and when vill you wenture to hold up your head a bit, and shew your sister you’ve as good a right to follow your own vays as she has ?”

“ Why, to be sure,” said Sally, “ there’s not so much difference in our ages, but I can’t help feeling as if she was much older, and as if it was my duty.”

“ Duty, indeed ! I hope you’re not going to vaste my time about talking to me about duty or any such nonsense : its all very vell of a Sunday, but I’ve something else of more signification to talk about now. You must know, my dear, the play is put off for a few nights, on account of one of the officers being ill, who is the best of the whole of them, and so they can’t perform without

him no ways. Vell, and they haven't fixed upon a night yet: for my own part, I'm not sorry for it, for my dress is not near ready; but as soon as hever I can, I'll find out when it is to be, and let you know, and in the mean time I must get you to help me with my new suit, for you are such a sweet work-woman at your needle!"

"What are you going to make?" enquired Sally.

"Come to me to-morrow morning, and I'll shew you all about it:—do you know mother has sent us down all new fashions from Lonnion: and do you know she says the Wellington 'at is quite gone hout ever since the hofficers have been made to leave off their cocked 'ats, and the Regency 'elmet is come instead. Oh la, oh la, nothing is vorn but the Regency bonnet, and a Regency bonnet I must have, cost what it vill. But the vorst part of the story is, that it must be trimmed all round with broad lace, there's not never such a harticle in my aunt's shop: but I must manage some how or other, so you see how much I've got to think of, and how I've got no time to lose: so good bye till to-morrow: as soon as *my* dress

is done, and the elmet all in readiness, we'll see about vhat you're to veар."

" I !" said Sally, " Ah, Eliza, I'm sure I shall not be able to go with you.—I am very sorry, but—"

" Give sorrow to the winds, I beg you, and say no such a thing : only attend to my advice, and pluck up a little spirit of your own, and carry things off a little better, and ve may do as ve please, I'll be bound."

When Rose and Sally were next together, Sally made an attempt, though not a very successful one, to obey this injunction ; she tried very hard to pluck up a little spirit to carry off the pain she felt, when Rose with much seriousness asked her for an explanation of her conduct ?

" An explanation ;" replied Sally, collecting her whole stock of courage, " why should I give you an explanation ?"

" I will tell you why, Sally, because I am certain that there must be some particular reason that can alone account for your having been tempted to commit so great a fault."

Sally was beginning to dispute upon the extent of the fault, when Rose interrupted her.

“Hear me, dear Sally,” said she, “you and I have been too well taught our duty to God, not to be certain that falsehood is displeasing to him.”

“Dear Sally, with all your faults I never knew you capable of deceit, I never could have believed you would have deceived me, and I am sure that having done so, you must be as unhappy as I am: somebody has misled, somebody has advised you to this, and I trust therefore, that God Almighty will forgive you: all I ask is, that you will tell me now the whole truth of it! Tell me, dear sister, all you feel.”

“Well then, Rose, since you desire it, the truth of what I think and feel is,” continued Sally, turning up the corner of her apron as she spoke, “that I do not see why I am always to tell you every thing: it was all very well when I was a little child, but now I really think that—that I am wise enough,—that is, I mean I am old enough to think sometimes for myself, and to do as other girls do.”

Rose stared at her sister in silent and unfeigned astonishment, while Sally, who felt she had now broken the ice, and cleared the

difficulty of the first word, proceeded thus—“ I have been going to tell you all this a long while, only I was afraid of offending you, for though I dare say you mean it for my good, and all that, yet I assure you every body laughs at me for letting you manage me as you do, and they say you domineer over me, and make me appear like a foolish simpleton, though I've as good a right to have my own way as you have.”

A pause of a few minutes ensued, while Sally, who waited in silence for Rose's answer, went on most diligently with the corner of her apron.

Rose's temper, however, was proof even against ingratitude, and she was more afflicted than angry at her sister's unkindness.

“ Is it my own sister Sally,” said she, while tears filled her eyes, “ who speaks to me in this way? Oh no, I am sure it cannot be, some one must have prompted her to this; some other friend is now her favourite companion, and advises and directs her as I have always done: my dear Sally likes her for the present better than she does me; but this will not, cannot last, and

whenever she wishes to return to my friendship and confidence, she will find me ready to receive her again with joy and thankfulness."

Rose left the room as she uttered this sentence, and Sally finding herself left wholly to her own reflections, which were not at this time the most agreeable in the world, immediately set out in hopes of finding comfort from her friend, who was now to supply to her the place that her affectionate sister had hitherto held. Eliza received her with exultation, and applauded and congratulated her on so happy an event.

"So now that you have quite shaked off such a hincumbrance, as one may call it, my dear, you may begin to enjoy yourself a bit, and be merrier, Sally."

"Oh yes," said Sally, "I dare say I shall be very merry, and quite enjoy myself soon; but I don't know how it is, just now, Eliza, I think I feel more unhappy than ever I did in my life before."

Eliza took the utmost pains to divert this melancholy, which she perceived was a point to be assiduously attended to. She summoned to her aid immediately the subject of

the review, and then of the play, and next of her own dress, and that of her friend, Sally, whom she coaxed, flattered, and consulted by turns, with unremitting perseverance, and for all this she had one additional motive, of but little less force than the one we have mentioned. The Regency helmet, which held the second place only in her mind, to the desire of revenge upon poor Rose, required, absolutely required, to be trimmed with lace. It would not do, it would not pass, in short, it would not be a *Regency helmet*, unless it were so trimmed. Now this was a point on which all her ingenuity and cunning had been bestowed in vain. She could think of no way of procuring a piece of lace, till somehow or other a vague idea suggested itself, that Sally might give her a helping hand in this difficulty.

The Fielding family were all lace-makers, and she thought there must be some bit of lace to be rummaged up, that may be she might get Sally to change with her for something else, or if she could manage the matter cleverly, might be prevailed upon to give her:—"Who knows what I may be

able to contrive when I've a mind," said she to herself again and again.

It will not surprise my readers to be told that, from this period, Sally became daily more and more estranged from her sister, in proportion as she was more and more the dupe, and the slave of her artful companion.

Her sister Rose was not aware of the extent of the danger to which Sally was exposed by the bad advice and example of the empty-minded worthless Eliza ; and having warmly, though vainly, exerted her own powers of persuasion for her benefit, she had no resource but to encourage herself in hoping, that a little time would convince Sally of her errors, for she dared not represent them to her mother, the poor widow being at this very time unfortunately confined to her bed from the state of debility occasioned by the lameness.

Whenever Mrs. Fielding did not absolutely forbid it, Rose sat by the side of her bed, and exerted all the little arts of comforting which a gentle and affectionate child so fully understands : at this time she thought it would have been cruelty, to afflict her mother with accounts of her sister's folly,

or her unkindness, especially as those visits were shortened by the many other concerns that her mother's illness left upon her hands, and the anxiety expressed by both her mother and grandmother for the event of the prize-day, which was now fast approaching.

Poor Rose had a great deal of anxiety upon her mind, and her spirits were much damped by Sally's behaviour, but she made no complaint, and, except that her cheeks were observed to be paler than usual, nobody discovered any traces of the uneasiness she suffered. She persevered in a steady course of well doing, and it was remarked, that she seemed now to redouble her exertions in the lace school.

Rachel Skinner, herself, was not more indefatigable, for Rose was even seen to be hard at work after every other girl had left the school.

Day after day now passed, and Sally had not made her appearance within its walls. Rachel ever and anon cast looks of malignant pleasure towards the empty seat which was seen next to that occupied by Rose ;

but Rose was, or seemed to be, too intent upon her own work to observe them, and Rachel's ill-natured desire to give her pain was consequently defeated.

And now there was but one week to the day on which the prizes were to be bestowed, when the following conversation passed between Lady Rushford and her niece.

"How many days will papa be travelling?" said Letitia; "how many days will it be before he arrives here, I mean?"

"About four, my dear, I believe," replied Lady Rushford.

"Let me see; four days—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday;—Oh, that will exactly do."

"Do for what, my dear Letitia? You forget to tell me what you are thinking of."

"Oh, I fancied you must know what I was thinking of—I mean the prize-day."

"Well, and what is it that will just do?"

"Ah, you are laughing at me, I know; you must be sure I mean that he will be just in time for it; and if he is, every thing will turn out exactly as I wish it to do: for Rose Fielding will be sure to get the prize, and

every thing else, you know you have promised it shall be according to my directions;—I mean, about where we are to sit, and how your chair is to be ornamented with flowers, and all those sort of things."

CHAP. XII.

“ So,” said Rose’s grandmother to her, “ so, so—to-morrow is the last day that remains before the prize-day : well, well, I say nothing ; I don’t expect any thing : I don’t think, that is, I don’t set my heart at all upon the matter, my dear ; I only beg that you’ll be there betimes in the morning : don’t stop to do a thing for me, or even for your poor mother to-morrow morning, darling. I’ll do every thing myself as handy as I used when I was young : dear me, I feel as if I was really young, when I think of what’s a-coming on : not that I set my heart upon it, dear, so don’t think I shall be disappointed if you should lose the prize, (which I am sure you won’t), don’t think I shall be flustered ; in short, don’t think of any body, or of any thing, except the lace.”

Rose needed not these anxious but kindly intended injunctions ; she well understood all the affectionate eagerness of the expectations entertained by her poor old relative, and the painful disappointment that would be felt if

she should have the misfortune to be pronounced an unsuccessful candidate, after the unceasing and laborious exertions she had made.

Rose was waiting ready at the door of the school the next morning to enter it the moment it was opened, and she suffered nothing to divert her attention. There was a neat green cloth covering belonging to every one of the lace pillows, with which they were wrapped round as soon as the girls left off working. When Rose, on this last morning, examined the length of her lace, she perceived that she had a full day's work to do, before it would measure the quantity it was required to be ; but she had scarcely been seated at it one hour, before she observed Rachel slowly rising from her seat, with great solemnity and parade, folding up her lace, and tying on the green covering to her pillow, as the signal that *her's* was completed.

No evil passion, however, could ever find its way into Rose's kind and ingenuous heart ; she gently withdrew her eye, and went on with her own work ; nor did she feel the slightest sensation of envy, though she was not without some degree of alarm,

for fear the evening should close in before she could complete the full measure of her lace.

Little Betsy sat watching her fingers as if her life depended upon the quickening of their motion.—Rose wanted her to read, or to amuse herself with some pictures she had given her, but nothing could persuade her to stir an inch from her side, or to remove her eyes from the lace.

“ How beautiful it is ! how sure *I am* they must give *you* the prize,” she incessantly repeated.

“ Hush, dear girl,” cried Rose frequently.

“ Dear Rose, why, there’s nobody left in the room now,” said Betsy, looking round ; “ some have finished, some have given up ; but they are all gone, so we may talk a little.”

“ A little, Betsy, but not much, for I do not think I work so quick when we talk, as when we are silent.”

“ Then see if I won’t be quite dumb,” cried Betsy, and she persevered in not uttering a word till they went home to dinner.

CHAP. XIII.

EARLY in the morning Eliza came in quest of her friend, to give her the information, that the long talked of review was positively to take place on the following day. In the many interviews that had lately taken place between these two friends, Sally's scruples of conscience had all been overcome, and she had actually planned to accompany Eliza first to the review, and afterwards to the play, without the consent or knowledge of her family.

Eliza had now got her under her thumb, as she called it, and it was therefore no longer necessary to soothe or to coax; she expected, and exacted without ceremony, the most slavish submission from Sally, always threatening to betray her to her mother and grandmother, if she ventured to murmur, or shew the least opposition to her wishes.

Poor Sally had by this time full experience of the woeful exchange she had made; and

she would often draw a melancholy comparison between the gentle and affectionate authority that it had once been the pleasure of her life to submit to, and the capricious tyranny she was now condemned to endure. She dared not complain, however, for any body would have told her the evil was of her own chusing, and it was this very truth that of all others she least wished to be reminded of.

There was but one person to whom she longed to confide the whole truth, and this was Rose herself. "Rose is the person," thought she, "to whom I have behaved with the greatest unkindness and ingratitude; yet Rose, I know, would be the first to forgive me: but we never talk together now as we used to do, so that I don't know how to begin; and then she is so busy preparing for the prize day, that she can have no time to think of me: she is sure to get the prize I know, and I dare say she is looking forward to the day with as much pleasure as ever! Ah," continued she, with a deep sigh, "I looked forward to it once—I had a good chance of the prize once, but my edging is

not nearly finished, and my name will no doubt be taken off the list, and I shall be disgraced. —But stop, let me not forget all the pleasure that I have in expectation :—there's the review, the soldiers, the music, and the flags, and the players, and my pink cap, to make up to me for all ; and then, though I shan't get the prize myself, which, after all, I never much expected, I shall have the pleasure of seeing it given to Rose. That tiresome girl Betty, (I don't see why I should not call her by her real name), she will try to prevent me from being present, I dare say, because she has nothing to do with it herself ; but she shall not, I can tell her, for I *will* see the prize given away to my dear, dear Rose, and nobody shall prevent me : and when it is all over and done with, and my pleasuring is all done with too, I'll take courage, and tell Rose all about it from beginning to end, and then, perhaps, I shall begin to be happy once more."

It was at the end of such a soliloquy as this, that Sally was informed by Eliza that the review was positively fixed for the following day.

“Good gracious! how unlucky!” exclaimed Sally: “Of all the days in the year, to-morrow is the prize-day!”

“The prize-day!” said Eliza, with a sneer, “what have you to do with the prize-day, I should wish to know? I should have thought, considering all things, Miss Sally would have been glad to have gone any where out of the way!”

“Then you are quite mistaken,” retorted Sally, “I know what you mean; but you’re quite wrong: for though I have given up all chance of the prize for myself, I shall have as much pleasure as ever in seeing it given to Rose: but we need not talk about it, for there will be time for both, I’ll be bound: the review, you say, is not to begin till one, and the prizes will be over before that time, so I’ll come to you directly after, and that you see, Eliza, will make every thing agreeable to every body.”

“Wastly fine talking, indeed, Miss Sally, so I’m to be left to finish my pelisse, and to trim my elmet, and to pin on my wail, and prepare all my dress by myself.—No—no—believe me, I submit to no such wile in-

gratitude, not I ! Come to me early in the morning, as ve agreed afore, or I've no-thing more to say to you ; you're no friend of mine ; I 'ate such wile ingratitude !”

“ Ingratitude !” cried Sally, with a sigh ; “ it was you who first taught me ingrati-tude.”

“ Wery vell, Miss, I sees 'ow it is : so here, if you please, we'll part for good and all.”

“ I do not wish to offend you, indeed,” said Sally : “ if there is any thing I can do that will satisfy you, except staying away from the prizes——”

“ Oh dear, pray don't consarn yourself about the matter : there is but vone vay to please me, Ma'am, and as that does not suit your conwenience, I vill have no more to say to you ; only you'll take the consequences ; you'll see to the vorst at vonce : it's the visest vay ;—unless you comes to me to-morrow morning, and make yourself useful and vel-come, vhy you don't go with me no where ; and your sister, and your mother, and your grand-mother, shall know every vord of vhat has passed ; then I think, between two stools, a

sartain person vill come to the ground, as in my opinion, the sartain person vell deserves. But howsomever, take a little time to consider of vhat I've said, and may be you'll alter your mind :—and if its your vish to be good friends with me again, vhy you know nothing is vanting but a bit of lace, and may be you'll manage it : but dare not tell me of going to the *prizes* instead of coming to me, or I bid you *farewell for ever!*" And, with a toss of the head, which indicated a most insulting pride, Eliza walked away.

Sally remained without motion for some minutes, as Eliza passed on : she thought over all she had said :—" Alas, I am indeed already fallen to the ground," thought she. " Now it is indeed that I have no power to think or act for myself. What shall I do ? I have no friend to advise or help me. Oh Rose, my dear sister Rose, if you only knew the misery I feel, unworthy as I am, you would pity and console me ! Oh what would I give for a word of your advice at this moment, but I cannot have it without confessing every thing, and then, perhaps, I shall lose you for ever : besides, this being the last

day, you will spend it in the Lace-school, and I must not wait till to-morrow before I make up my mind. Oh dear me, I wish somehow that Eliza had never come to live with Dame Rogers!"

Sally could not bring herself to go to the school, so that the first time she saw her sister Rose was at dinner-time. Sally was then in hopes that her swoln eyes would attract her sister's attention, and that she would comfort her, at least, with a few words. She sighed and hemmed, and sighed again, and did all she could to engage her attention ; but poor Rose had scarcely begun a very scanty meal before her grandmother hurried her away again, and Sally saw her leave the room with little Betsy, without having been able to speak a word with her.

The evening was now closing in, and Betsy had opened the lattice window of the school-room, to let in the last rays of the setting sun ; when Eliza, who found she could not get on to her satisfaction with her dress without Sally's assistance, and fearful that Rose should regain the place she had held in her affections, set out towards the Lace-

school in search of her, that she might receive her answer. She saw nothing, however, of Sally on the way, and the door of the school she dared not enter. She notwithstanding peeped in at the open window as she passed, and saw that Rose, and Betsy by her side, both hard at work, were the only persons there.

She had hardly walked a step or two further, before she heard a violent outcry.

A poor little boy was passing along the road, mounted between the panniers of an ass, which were filled with vegetables. The poor animal had set his foot upon a stone that lay in the road, and fallen to the ground. The boy was thrown over his head, and all the vegetables strewed on the road.

“ O help me, help me !” screamed out the boy, as he exerted himself to get up ; help me, that I may lift my poor donkey on his legs again ; help me to pick up these carrots and turnips, or I shall be beat to death when I go home.”

“ Who in the world are you bawling to ?” said Eliza, “ and who do you expect to de-

mean themselves to stoop and pick up your vegetables out of the dirt, indeed?"

"I see somebody," replied the boy, smiling with delight through his tears,—"I see somebody coming, who, I know, will help me."

Eliza turned round, and saw little Betsy running towards them, and in an instant afterwards, Rose following her. They had heard his cries, as they sat at work in the school room, and came with all speed to his assistance.

"It is my own dear Billy," cried Betsy. "Rose, you remember Billy, the little boy I told you was so good to his mother, don't you?"

The poor donkey was soon upon his legs again; and while Betsy diligently set to work to pick up the scattered contents of the panniers, Rose seated herself on a bank, and supported poor Billy in her arms, examining if he was any where seriously bruised or hurt. She perceived what he himself had not been aware of, that the blood was trickling down from a cut on the head.

"Poor dear boy," said Rose, much frightened at this discovery, "I must take you

home, and get proper assistance for you directly."

"Oh no, don't take me home," cried he : "the donkey is none of mine, nor the vegetables neither ; I am but a poor serving boy, and was sent to sell them as well as I could : the man will be very angry with me, he will not believe that I could not help all this mischief ; he'll beat me very hard, I am afraid ; but indeed I could not help it."

"What man are you speaking of ?" asked Rose ; "and where does he live ?"

"The gardener that works at the great great house," replied the boy ; Mr. ——"

"What, Betsy's father ?" continued Rose.

"Yes, the same."

"Then never fear," said Rose, "I will tell him the whole truth, and I am sure he will believe me : so do not cry any more Billy, for I am sure you will not be unkindly treated."

Billy's fears were somewhat quieted by this assurance, and he suffered her to seat him again on the ass, which she then undertook to lead home.

CHAP. XIV.

By nine o'clock the next morning the whole village of Missenden was in commotion: fathers, mothers, grandsires, grandames, all were dressed in their best clothes, and waiting for the hour at which they were to be admitted into the parks of the mansion of Sir Clement and Lady Rushford.

Rose's grandmother, who had spent the whole of the preceding evening in folding and crimping and smoothing the renowned and valued cap, had placed it upon her head by sun-rise, with more real satisfaction than perhaps the most fashionable lady ever felt in adorning herself with the smartest head-dress in the world.

Rose, fresh and blooming as usual, and clad in her best attire, was ready to accompany her long before the appointed hour.—Her mother, whose lameness obliged her to remain at home even upon this in-

teresting occasion, gazed upon her child with maternal pride.

“ Dear Rose,” said she, tenderly embracing her, “ *If you should gain the Prize, dear!*” —

“ If!” cried her grandmother, with an indignant look, at a word which expressed a doubt upon the subject.

But Mrs. Fielding calmly continued, “ You know, dear, if you should gain the Prize, the pleasure it will give us! All I wish to say to you now, therefore, my dear one, is, that if fortune should decide against you, I shall still be sure that no diligence, no pains have been wanting on your part, that no disgrace will attend you, and I shall therefore be fully satisfied, let the event be what it may, and you are still to me my beloved child, the most valuable of all prizes in the world.”

Where was Sally at this time?

She was doubting and doubting to the very last. Wavering between her wish of going to the parks, and her fears of Eliza’s anger. The latter, however, yielded at length to the first; and when she saw her sister ready to set out, and receiving her mother’s blessing, she de-

terminated to accompany her at all hazards, though the consciousness of her own misconduct embittered the pleasure with which she anticipated Rose's triumph : "I wonder," thought she to herself, with a sigh, "Rose does not pity me more ; she looks as smiling and contented as ever, though she must know, that my unfinished edging will bring me to disgrace ; but I suppose she cannot love me as she used to do, for I do not deserve it, and she can think of nothing now but her own success : indeed it would be cruel to call her attention now but for a single moment."

At length the wished-for moment was arrived : at eleven o'clock the gates of the lodge were thrown open. It was a beautiful summer's day. On the velvet lawn, before Sir Clement Rushford's house, were placed two elegant, though rural, garden chairs, ornamented with clusters, and wreaths of natural flowers. At a little distance, on one side, were benches for the girls and villagers, who were admitted as spectators. Near them, under the shade of some spreading oaks on the other side of the lawn, tables were co-

vered with a repast, of which every body present was allowed to partake.

Soon after the lace-makers were assembled, the drawing-room windows were thrown open, and Lady Rushford and Miss Lenox, followed by a party of ladies and gentlemen, walked out upon the lawn. Amongst the latter was Dr. Lenox, whose humane and amiable disposition derived particular gratification from the passing scene.

After a few minutes, Lady Rushford and Miss Lenox took their seats, and Lady Rushford then enquired whether the women who had been appointed as judges, were all agreed upon the point in question? And being assured that they were, she desired they might be called.

These women were all experienced lace-makers, and in no way interested as to the event, a point which had been particularly insisted upon, to prevent the danger of their giving a partial opinion.

No sooner did they make their appearance, carrying the two successful lace-pillows in their arms, than every eye was turned to see to whom they belonged. But this we

all in vain, for each pillow was carefully concealed underneath its green case. There was an awful silence at the moment! The hearts of all concerned, palpitated with hope and fear!

Rose, blushing deeply, sat with her eyes fixed upon the ground.

Rachel was perceived with her face as white as a sheet, and her throat stretched to an unusual height.

Betsy held Rose's hand in silence.

Sally, who had nothing to hope for herself, or to fear for Rose, observed all that passed with the minutest attention.

The poor old grandmother shook from head to foot, and her eyes, dimmed with tears, distinguished nothing plainly but that Rose was close beside her.

At length Lady Rushford rose from her seat. "What name," said she, in an audible voice, "what name is inserted upon the pillow upon which the most beautiful *Piece of Lace* has been found?"

"*Rachel Skinner, aged sixteen years,*" was the reply. Another pause ensued; but various were the sounds and murmurs that

were heard, and marked and visible the disappointment that shewed itself on the countenances of the chief part of the assembly.

Letitia Lenox looked with tearful eyes to the place where Rose was standing, and saw the grandmother attempting to move from the crowd.

“ Rose !” cried the poor old woman, in a faltering voice, “ take me home, dear. I cannot see my way, but lead me child, lead me home.”

Rose in vain endeavoured to hide her emotion :—“ Don’t, my dear, don’t now think I am disappointed ; I told you from the first I should not be disappointed—I only want to go home because I am not well—as to the Prize, what does it signify who gets the Prize ? I am not such a fool as you take me for,” said she, wiping her eyes—“ I never was happier in my life ; I only want you to take me away, dear, that is all.”

“ What stupid people these judges must be,” said Sally, indignantly.

“ See how proud that odious Rachel looks,” cried little Betsy, sobbing.

“ Dear grandmother,” said Rose, “ stay a

few minutes longer ; rest yourself on this bench, and just stay till we know to whom the second prize will be given ; that may be some comfort to you yet."

" Oh no, it cannot, it cannot," cried Sally ; " it will be no comfort, it will be worse ; let grandmother go, Rose, let her go."

The old woman, however, consented to rest upon the bench, for in truth she did not find it easy to stand.

At this instant, Miss Lenox stood up, and desired that the name upon the pillow on which the most beautiful *Piece of Edging* had been found, might now be read aloud.

The woman leisurely took off the green covering—

" *Sally Fielding, aged fourteen years,*" repeated she, in an audible voice.

Sally uttered a scream of surprise ; and every eye regarded her with astonishment :—" There has been some mistake," exclaimed she, " there has indeed !"

" Oh, hush, my dear Sally," cried Rose ; but Sally heeded her not.

" My Lady," interrupted she, in spite of

all opposition, “ pray, my Lady, let me speak !”

Sally’s companions wondered at her temerity, but she was not to be silenced.—“ There must be some mistake, indeed, my Lady ; I humbly beg your pardon ; but I must make so bold as to say, that I do not and cannot deserve the prize, for I left my edging half unfinished on the pillow : but Rose, my Lady—”

“ My good girl,” observed Lady Rushford, gravely interrupting her, “ every thing upon this occasion must proceed according to the rules and regulations already laid down. I cannot easily imagine how any mistake can have occurred ; and with respect to the merits of the lace, my opinion is of no more importance than yours. It rests with me, indeed, to award the *Prize*, but the judges alone are to decide whose lace is most deserving of it ; and you, I think,” continued she, addressing herself to the women, “ are fully determined—you have no hesitation upon the subject ?”

“ My Lady,” replied one of them, curtseying all the time she spoke,—“ my Lady,

there is no manner of doubt ; the point is not at all dubious, as to which bit of lace is the best made, out of all those which are of the proper length, my Lady ; as we have said before, my Lady, it is that made by Rachel Skinner, my Lady."

" You see," pursued Lady Rushford, " it is all right ; we must therefore proceed."

" But, my Lady," continued the woman, " if your Ladyship wishes to know all the particulars of our way of thinking on the matter, the truth is, we all were agreed, my Lady, that there was one piece of lace, more beautiful without any degree of comparison, my Lady, than Rachel Skinner's, my Lady."

" Well," said Lady Rushford, " why then did you not select this piece ?"

" Oh, my Lady, because it was too short, my Lady ; it fell short of the right measure by two or three yards. It was the handsomest lace to be sure, that ever was seen, it would have fetched two guineas, and we all agreed, what a pity it was it shouldn't have been a bit longer, for as it is, it will be of no more good to the poor girl who made it, than nothing at all, for she'll have her name

taken out of the list of the school to a certainty, poor thing."

"Whose name was it you found upon the pillow you are speaking of?" asked Lady Rushford.

"Whose name, my Lady? Whose name, dear me! With your Ladyship's leave I will try and recollect it; perhaps, neighbour Dickons, you happen to remember; the names being strange, I really have forgot."—

"I cannot be positive as to the name," replied Mrs. Dickons, "I only know that as the lace was too short, we have put it, according to the direction, along with the rest as will come to disgrace. If your Ladyship pleases to see the pillows, they are in readiness."

Lady Rushford desired they might be brought, in order that the names which were found upon them might be erased from the list of the lace-makers with due form and ceremony.

Five unfortunate girls now saw by turns their pieces of unfinished work produced, and Mrs. Primer's dreadful pen drawn across their names in the list,

The cover of the sixth was now removed. “There,” said the woman, “there is the short piece of lace; you will judge for yourself, my Lady.”

“To whom does it belong?” asked Lady Rushford.

“To Rose Fielding, my Lady.”

“Rose Fielding!” cried Lady Rushford, almost starting with surprise.

“Rose Fielding!” echoed at least twenty voices.

“Rose Fielding!” faltered the poor old grandmother, “Ah me, I fear 'twill be my death.—No, no, don't try to comfort me now,” said she, turning away as Rose endeavoured to support her: “don't trouble yourself about me any more:—you have deceived me, girl.”

“No, dearest grandmother, do not say so; some mistake,” cried Rose, sobbing.

“Mistake! oh no, it is as clear as the day, there's no mistake: there, there, scratch out her name, the sooner the better, she deserves it; and—and—I won't complain, for she has deceived us all. I could not have believed it; but I am a foolish old woman; she has deceived me, she has deceived us all!”

"Oh, if I might but speak to my Lady," faltered Rose, "but she'll never believe me, and nobody will speak for me."

"Fear not," said a gentle voice; "the good are never without friends to speak for them."

Rose looked gratefully towards the speaker; —it was Mrs. Priscilla Pemberton.

"Friend," continued she, extending her hand to Rose, "what wouldest thou say?"

"Ask Mrs. Primer, if you please," said Rose, "if my lace was not last night the proper length?"

"Mrs. Primer," interrupted Lady Rushford, for she had not distinctly heard what was passing, "have you erased the name of Rose Fielding from the list?"

"I have not, my Lady," replied Mrs. Primer, I thought my Lady might be pleased to consider of it; but if your Ladyship wishes it—"

"Wishes it!" exclaimed Miss Lenox; "Oh, Lady Rushford, you surely cannot wish, you cannot direct it to be so!"

"Letitia," said Lady Rushford, very gravely, and loud enough for every body to hear; "this is not an occasion upon which

we can allow ourselves to be biassed by our feelings. I must own, that from the character which Rose Fielding bears in this village, from her well known habits of industry and perseverance, I had not expected this: on the contrary, I hoped to have had this day the gratification of bestowing upon her the Prize which I had thought she would have so well deserved. It would have given me particular satisfaction to have honoured her with a distinction similar to that of which her grandmother is so justly proud; but I must not, on this or on any other account, depart in the smallest degree from the prescribed rules: whatever my wishes may have been, it is my duty to see that the whole is conducted with the most impartial justice."

Rachel Skinner, during this speech, sat bridling her head, and looking with ill-natured triumph upon Rose.

" You must therefore proceed, Mrs. Primer, if you please," continued Lady Rushford, " that those who have been more fortunate on this occasion, may receive their due. Every thing must proceed fairly."

" Why then, my Lady, if I may be so bold as to speak my mind, my Lady, I think

that every thing will not go on fairly, if Rose's name is taken out of the list without an explanation; for I am positively certain, that last night her lace was the length it should be!"

"That indeed it was," said Sally, "that it was, I'm quite sure; speak out, good Mrs. Primer, and tell my Lady all about it."

"It was sun-set, my Lady, last night, when I went as usual to lock up the school. I thought to have found it empty; but there was Rose still hard at work, and that little girl, Betsy, watching by her side. I knew, my Lady, at the time, that Rose Fielding had not allowed herself time to eat her dinner, that she might finish her lace; and this was not because she was behind-hand of a day from idleness, but because, as I take it, she had been working at her sister Sally's pillow as well as her own.—

"Are you quite sure that what you now state is the exact truth, Mrs. Primer? for pray observe, no partiality must be allowed to influence the decision of this day."

"I can, my Lady, take upon me to answer for the truth of all I have said, though not one word did Rose tell me about it

herself;—but of this I am positive, that I saw with my own eyes that her lace was long enough last night within an inch, for, says I to her, ‘ Come, dear, its time to leave off and shut up school, I’m sure you look tired enough;’ but she answered in her pretty gentle way, ‘ Do, good neighbour Primer, let me have *one* half hour more, I only want to make an inch more lace, you know, that it may be *good measure*, for my lace must be sure to be the full length at any rate, or my grandmother will be so grieved.’—Poor thing! she said that with a light heart, little dreaming how matters would turn out; and then she takes and measures it out to shew me, and it was the full length then. Now it cost me some trouble to go away and come again in half an hour, but I had not the heart to refuse so good a girl, so that I left the door open and went away, wishing her success and a good night.”

“ You see, you see, dear Lady Rushford,” cried Letitia joyfully.

“ I see enough,” replied Lady Rushford, “ to convince me of the merit and excellence of Rose Fielding’s conduct.”

“ Well, and the Prize then— ?”

“ The Prize can only be given according to rule.”

“ But surely in *justice* you will not suffer such an occurrence as this to deprive her of the honours she so richly deserves !”

“ Whatever her deserts may be, my dear, this occurrence robs her of the *Prize*, unless indeed the mystery that there seems to be in the business could be satisfactorily explained : if the lace that is missing could be discovered and produced, and it could be clearly proved that the present deficiency was owing to an accident in which she herself was not to blame, the case would then be altered ; though certainly, in *justice*, such an accident should not be suffered to interfere with the decision of the judges ; but I fear there is little chance of this ; and Rose Fielding must endeavour therefore to support the disappointment, by the consoling reflection, that it was not brought upon her by her own misconduct.”

Miss Lenox looked as if she thought this reflection not adequate to the effect of consoling Rose.

“ My good girl,” said she to Rose, “ have you no idea yourself, how all this can have

happened? don't be afraid, Rose, speak out and explain it, if you can."

"I cannot, Ma'am," said Rose, with tears in her eyes; "I do not know, I cannot guess how it can have happened."

"My dear Letitia," said Lady Rushford, "we must delay no longer. Mrs. Primer, we must now proceed to——"

"Oh stop, stop, dearest Lady Rushford," exclaimed Miss Lenox, forgetting that she was in her chair of state, and running up to her cousin;—"do stop a little: while there may be the least chance, I am sure every body here" (said she, turning towards the crowd), "would wish you to wait: they would rather be detained an hour longer, I know, than have it end in this way.—Every body knows the goodness and worth of Rose Fielding—every body will for her sake—"

Here a number of voices were heard at once—"Oh, that we will; we would readily wait all day, to do her any good—she's the best of daughters," said one; "the best of sisters," said Sally;—"the most industrious girl in the parish; the most sweet-tempered creature, God bless her; she never did a

hurt to no one ; she never spoke an ill-natured word !——”

“ God, in his goodness, forgive me,” sobbed the delighted old grandmother, as she listened to the praises so warmly bestowed upon her darling ;—“ God forgive me, for having wronged her for a moment.—Oh, my Lady, if the prayers of such an old woman as I am, could prevail with you——”

“ If my wishes, my entreaties,” said Letitia, taking her hand——

“ My dear Letitia, my good friends all,” said Lady Rushford, “ if I were not already disposed to grant any indulgence consistent with justice in this case, the petitions of so many persons are, I must confess, a powerful inducement, for undoubtedly every encouragement is due to her whose worth is so warmly and universally acknowledged ; I cannot, however, refrain from seriously lamenting, that the present instance offers no chance that time may explain the mystery we all so earnestly regret ; and this is absolutely necessary. Can any body here suggest any thing that may lead to a discovery ?”

“ Can any of you ?” said Letitia. “ Do

not be afraid of speaking," continued she, looking anxiously amongst the villagers.

There was a dead silence, which was interrupted only by a triumphant laugh from Rachel Skinner.

" You see, my dear Miss Lenox," said Lady Rushford, " we may as well proceed."

Miss Lenox, seeming reluctantly to submit, walked slowly and silently back to her chair.

Not another word was spoken by any one, till at length Lady Rushford stood up:—" Rachel Skinner," said her Ladyship——

Rachel came forward.

At this instant shrieks were heard, that seemed to proceed from the road that ran by the side of the park.

" What can be the matter?" said Lady Rushford, much alarmed:—every body looked towards the lodge, and several were preparing to run to the road, when Betsy Dawkins was seen at a distance, bounding rapidly along, waving something in her hand. A little boy, with his head bound up, was running by her side with equal speed. As they came nearer, the boy was found to be poor Billy, who, regardless of the effects of his

last night's accident, seemed to partake in Betsy's animation.

"We've got it! We've got it!" they both exclaimed. "We've found it," said Billy, clapping his hands. "Here it is," continued Betsy, still waving in her hand the something, which was presently discovered to be a bonnet and feathers.

The shrieks were now repeated.—"For heaven's sake, what is the matter?" cried Lady Rushford. "What is the meaning of all this? An accident has surely happened; let us see if we cannot administer some assistance."

"Oh my Lady," (said little Betsy, though so out of breath she could hardly speak), "nothing at all is the matter; she's not the least hurt, my Lady; she's none the worse for the tumble, my Lady."

"Who is none the worse? Whom are you speaking of?"

"They're coming, they're coming," said the little girl, pointing to the gate: "they did not run so fast as Billy or I, or they'd have been here by this time; but they'll soon be here now, and then you'll know all about it."

A minute after this, three persons were distinguished coming across the park ; they drew nearer and nearer, and at length Eliza Burrows, forcibly led along by Betsy's father and Dame Rogers, stood before the wondering assembly ! The poor Dame was crying, and wringing her hands. The gardener, who, having helped to bring Eliza, had no farther part in the scene, made his bow and retired among the crowd ; and Eliza, who was certainly the principal performer, had now ceased to scream, and seemed making every effort to carry it off with a *high hand*, as she called it : but her whole appearance at this moment was not much in her favour ;—her countenance was pale as death, from conscious guilt ; her bonnet was off, and her hair hung down in a disorderly manner about her ears ; her dress, which was composed of the most tawdry and absurd materials, was entirely covered with dust, and torn almost to tatters : and the odious mixture she displayed, of finery and slovenliness, boldness and terror, gaiety and misery, was striking and disgusting.

“ My Lady,” (said little Betsy, very courageously), “ I think that the lace which that

girl has pinned round this green bonnet, is a part of Rose's lace. It was long enough and to spare, my Lady, last night ; I stood by Rose when she measured it, just before Billy screamed out, and tumbled off his donkey. Rose ran as fast as she could, when she thought something was the matter, as she always does, my Lady, for she's so good-natured, and she was in such a hurry, she forgot to tie on the green cover, my Lady ; and when we got out to Billy, that girl was standing by the road, saying something to him."

" Yes," cried Billy, " she said she would not demean herself to help me nor my vegetables. It was lucky for me she was not the only person near."

" Who else was near ?" asked Lady Rushford.

" Nobody," replied Billy, " but Rose and Betsy ; but they were enough ; they did every thing for me."

" Did you see what became of this girl afterwards ?"

" Yes," said Billy, " I recollect now, that while Rose was rubbing the dust off my

head, I saw her go into the school : I thought to myself, how different you are from the girl who's stroking my head at this moment."

" Did you see her come out of the school?"

" No, my Lady, I did not see her, or wish to see her, any more."

" But I did," said Betsy, " for one of the turnips I was picking up had rolled to the door of the school, and as I stooped to take hold of it, she ran out of the door, and passed by me as quick as lightning ; but I was thinking of Billy then, so I took no notice of her : just after, came Mrs. Primer, and locked up the school."

" Mrs. Primer," said Lady Rushford, looking towards the crowd :

" Here I am, my Lady."

" Did you lock up the school at the time this child mentions ?"

" I did, my Lady."

" When did you open it again ?"

" Not till the judges were going in, in the morning, my Lady."

" Very well, did any body else go with them into the school ?"

" Not a creature, my Lady."

“ Eliza Burrows,” said Lady Rushford, looking stedfastly in her face, “ the evidence is very strong against you. What have you to say in your defence ?”

“ Vhy,” stammered Eliza, “ I have to say, that I don’t see vhy I am to be accused by that vicked little thing, and every thing as she says is to be believed, when it is all falsity ; so I shall take the law of her, and of all of you, that’s what I vill.”

“ Young woman,” said Dr. Lenox (coming forward), “ you must say something more satisfactory in your defence, or the law, I am afraid, will go against you.”

“ Confess thy sins, if thou dost hope for mercy,” cried Mrs. Pemberton.

Miss Lenox, who for the last few minutes had been in consultation with Betsy, intently examining the lace, now carried it forward to Rose’s pillow, and placed one end of it, which hung in a slovenly way from the back of the bonnet, to the uneven and jagged end of that which was on the pillow—“ It fits, it fits !” exclaimed Betsy, in an agony of pleasure.

Every thread, indeed, exactly fitted, and

it was in vain to hold out longer against a circumstance so convincing. Eliza trembled in every limb.

“ Oh Betty, I have often warned thee in vain ; but confess thy sins now, I pray thee, ere thou comest to an untimely end !”

Eliza threw herself upon her knees, and begged for mercy ; and after many tears, and sobs, and windings about, confessed the whole. She had been tempted by the opportunity that presented itself for slipping into the Lace-school, unperceived (as she thought) by any body. The first sight that offered itself to her, was Rose’s beautiful lace, lying on the pillow uncovered. Her two leading propensities, the vanity of dress, and her desire of revenge, might now be gratified in the space of a moment :—no counteracting principle guarded against their power ; she yielded to the temptation, and seizing a pair of scissars that lay on the bench, hastily cut off three or four yards from the piece of lace, and, stuffing it into her pocket, she ran home as fast as possible, glorying in the success of her scheme. The next morning, when her aunt and the rest of the village were engaged in Sir Clement Rushford’s

park, she ventured to take out of her pocket the ill-gotten treasure, and pinning it in a most careless manner, though to her own entire satisfaction, upon the *Regency helmet*, she placed it upon her head at the glass, and delighted with the effect, she determined to set out immediately for the review, and to go from thence to the play; and not to return till after dark, that her stolen ornament might not be remarked by any of the neighbours: she now rejoiced in the quarrel which had taken place between her and Sally, and resolved, if she followed her to the review, to let her know she would be no longer acquainted. Thus exulting in the prospect of the day that was before her, she set out to walk to Amersham.

She had not gone many yards before she was overtaken by a jockey cart, and the delightful idea of riding, instead of walking, into the town, and displaying her Regency helmet in a carriage, induced her to bribe the boy to take her up; and as he was going the same way, he was tempted by her silver sixpence to give her a lift.

Short, however, was the triumph of this *scheme*, for in turning a corner of the road,

an unfortunate gust of wind blew off the Regency helmet from the head on which it was placed rather too easily for security ; and as it flew before the eyes of the horse, the poor animal took fright at so unusual an appearance, and starting suddenly out of the road, overturned the jockey cart upon a bank, and lodged his driver and Miss Eliza Burrows on the dusty road. The screams of the lady soon brought several persons to her assistance, and among these, she perceived, with some dismay, her aunt, John Dawkins, and his daughter Betsy.

A suspicion of the truth having occurred to the little girl, she had slipped away from the park, and having induced Dame Rogers to accompany her, she went first to her father's, and related to him the whole story, who, finding that his favourite, Rose Fielding, was likely to be the sufferer, immediately declared himself most ready to assist in searching for the person suspected to be in possession of the lace.

No sooner did the pursuers reach the spot where the accident happened, than little Betsy's sharp eyes darted upon the bonnet *that was lying* in the road ; she caught it up,

and waited only to shew it to her father and Dame Rogers, when she ran off exulting, with the prize in her hand.

As she passed the cottage where Billy lived, she stepped in to give him a short account of what had happened ; and as he then recollect ed that he had seen the ill-natured girl going into the Lace-school, no persuasions could prevent him from following Betsy and the rest of the group to the park.

“ Lawk, lawk, it was a day of ill luck, sure enough, that brought her to my house,” cried Dame Rogers ; “ for she’s been the ruination of me ever sinnee she set foot within my doors. Oh lawk-a-daisy, I wish I’d got my candles, and my cheese, and them sort of things again : bad as things were then, sure I was far better off than with all that rubbishing nonsense as her mother has crammed my shop with, and which she so bedizens herself in, but nobody ever buys any thing of it all, and she’ll bring me to the workhouse at last, as sure as my name is Rogers.”

“ Good Mrs. Rogers,” said Lady Rushford, interrupting this soliloquy, “ I feel much concern for your situation, and will undertake to establish you in a comfortable

trade, and to ensure you sufficient and constant custom in it, as long as you reside in this parish ; but this can only be on one condition."

" Oh lawk," exclaimed the Dame, clasping her hands in an ecstacy, " good luck, real good luck, is come to me at last, when least I thought of it !—Any condition, my Lady ; name it, my Lady, name it, if you please."

" It is one that I think you will not be likely to object to. What I desire is, that you immediately send back your niece to her mother : the habits and manners she has contracted are not fit for the country ; and I should be sorry that the young women in whose welfare I am interested, were exposed to the pernicious effects of such an example."

" My Lady, she shall go back, as she comed, by the Amersham coach, to-morrow morning," eagerly replied Dame Rogers, rubbing her hands with satisfaction at the bare idea.

" And now," continued Lady Rushford, " we must hasten to conclude the ceremony that has been so unexpectedly prolonged :—the mystery is effectually cleared up ; a sufficient quantity of lace is proved to have been made by Rose Fielding, to entitle her to a

chance of the Prize, and the judges have already, I think, pronounced her work decidedly the best:—are you,” enquired she, turning towards them, “ are you all unanimous?”

“ My Lady,” replied one of the women, “ we have been unanimous from the very first.”

“ It is with real satisfaction then,” pursued Lady Rushford, “ that I now bestow the highest Prize upon her, whose conduct has been, in all respects, so deserving of this reward! I have next to observe, that the object of this institution is not merely to encourage the manufactory of lace in this village; but, by the incitement of those prizes, to promote the virtues of industry and perseverance. It is my earnest hope,” continued she, “ that this desirable purpose may be accomplished without producing the pernicious feelings of envy and malice, the appearance of which I shall ever think it my duty to discourage, to the utmost in my power.”

All eyes were turned towards Rachel, as Lady Rushford pronounced these words: she was conspicuous in the group, with a countenance marked with rage, which, however, *she thought* herself obliged to endeavour to

conceal. Few pitied, or offered consolation for the disappointment she experienced, for her disagreeable and unfriendly temper was well known and disliked, and she was in consequence shunned by every one.

Lady Rushford, in consideration of the hopes that had been given her, and the merit of her work, felt the inclination to confer upon her some kind of reward, as a compensation for the disappointment she had experienced; but having remarked the symptoms of envy and malice betrayed by Rachel on the occasion, she on reflection thought it would be more conducive to her real good, to let her endure the full force of the uneasiness this accident had brought upon her.

No triumph, however, was visible in the modest joy that beamed upon the countenance of Rose herself, though we are not quite so sure that a small portion of it did not mix in the honest exultation that sparkled in the eyes of Sally and the poor old grandmother.

“I can guess now,” cried Sally to the latter, “who finished my edging for me, while I was going on foolishly and shamefully with that wicked girl Eliza. There is but one person in all the world who could repay the

base ingratitude I have been guilty of with such kindness;—but I will not take the prize as if it was my due, I will tell my Lady this very minute, the whole story of my wicked conduct, and she shall punish or disgrace me as she pleases.”

Sally kept her word, and related with exact self-accusation all that had passed since the arrival of Eliza Burrows in the village.

CHAP. XV.

LADY RUSHFORD was charmed with the interesting appearance and exemplary conduct of Rose, and affected by the ingenuous humility of her sister Sally. The character of her artful friend Eliza Burrows being on this day so fully revealed, and appearing so forcibly in contrast with the steady sisterly affection and integrity of Rose, would in future, she hoped, put her on her guard against the influence of such a friend and companion.

With respect to the second prize, no rule being laid down for so unexpected a circumstance, as the same lace being made by two different persons, Lady Rushford considered herself at liberty to use her own judgment upon the occasion, and feeling that Rose's conduct could not be too highly rewarded, she pronounced that it should be bestowed upon her, with the liberty of transferring it to her sister;—“I know,” continued she, “that I shall enhance the pleasure to Rose by so doing; and it is proper that Sally

Fielding should receive it at the hands of her sister, to whose affectionate exertions she is indebted for its completion. May it serve to keep alive in her memory, and in her heart, the occurrences of the last few weeks: may the lesson it presents be serviceable to her through her future life, and may she hence-forward learn to estimate the value of such a friend as Rose."

And now, my young readers, picture to yourselves if you can, the delightful return of the happy group of persons to the cottage of widow Fielding.

The latter had been watching with the painful anxiety which so unexpected a delay had occasioned, when, at length, after many misgivings of the heart, she beheld at her door, the grandmother leaning on Rose's arm, and Sally, Betsy Dawkins, and little Billy, running on before, followed by a crowd of neighbours all sympathising in their joyful feelings, and rejoicing in a success so well and strikingly deserved.

"Now papa," said Letitia, addressing Dr. Lenox, "now remember your promise: this is the young person I was telling you about; *it is her mother—*"

"Let me assure you, Letitia," replied the doctor, "that I am not more inclined to forget my promise at this moment, than you, I see, would be to allow me to do so."

"Come then, come directly, papa."

"No, my dear," said Lady Rushford, "suffer them to enjoy the happiness of this first meeting, unrestrained by the presence of any stranger; and to-morrow morning we will not fail to visit them, and bestow what benefits may be within our power."

Letitia, whose benevolent heart had for several weeks dwelt with hope and pleasure upon one favourite object, which the arrival of Dr. Lenox gave her the hope of accomplishing, now found it very difficult to wait with patience till to-morrow;—the day and night seemed unusually long, although it cannot be denied that the sun both sat and rose with its usual punctuality.

After a few days, however, Letitia was rewarded by the realization of her benevolent wishes. The visit was paid, and Dr. Lenox, whose medical skill enabled him to ascertain the cause of Miss Fielding's lameness, immediately pronounced it to be his opinion, that her complaint had been impro-

perly treated; and to this he added, that there were reasonable grounds for hope, that the remedies he was now about to administer, if regularly applied, would in a short time complete her cure.

“Her cure!” exclaimed Rose, embracing her mother with the wildest joy, “and will she indeed be quite cured?”

“I will venture to promise it,” replied Dr. Lenox; “and this blessing, in addition to so many others, she may attribute to the admirable dispositions of her daughter Rose.”

“And,” rejoined Lady Rushford, “this virtuous daughter is the gift of *bounteous Heaven* to a virtuous mother!”

The young readers will, I have no doubt, feel some curiosity to be informed respecting the nature and value of the prizes bestowed by Lady Rushford; and for their sakes we have taken upon us to examine the village annals from which our story has been compiled. We have therefore to acquaint them, that there is good reason to suppose that the Prize, which was on this occasion delivered to Rose Fielding, was no other than

A SILVER TIME-PIECE,

with Lady Rushford's name engraven on the back, and underneath the following applicable and instructive lines were added :

Time idly lost, no art or care
The blessing can restore,
And heaven exacts strict account
For every mispent hour.

Short is our longest day of life,
And soon its prospects end,
Yet on that day's uncertain date,
Eternal years depend.

Yet equal to our Being's aim,
The space to virtue given,
And every minute well improved,
Secures an age in heaven.

Vide Mrs. Carter's Letters.

And though no mention is made of the second Prize, yet we have learned from the leaf of an old book, that it was something both flattering and agreeable to receive, and at the same time useful, such as implements of housewifery, books, &c. &c.

THE END.







